

Version number:	Status:	Owner:	Approved By:	Date of Approval:	Date of Next Review:
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Recognition of Prior Certified Learning (RPCL) guidance notes

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What is RPCL?

Recognition of Prior Certified Learning (RPCL) is the process which allows you to transfer Higher Education credit points you have previously gained elsewhere to OCA - providing it is at the correct academic level and in the correct academic field for the OCA degree programme that you wish to study.

A traditional university undergraduate degree programme takes 3 years to complete at a full time rate. Each year equates to a specific level/stage. This is reflected in the UK Regulated and Qualifications Framework (RQF) and the Framework for Higher Education Qualifications (FHEQ). More details to understanding qualification levels can be found at

<https://www.gov.uk/what-different-qualification-levels-mean>

To obtain a HE qualification, credits must be obtained from the study and successful assessment of course units which are accredited at Level/Stage 1 (HE4), Level/Stage 2 (HE5) and Level/Stage 3 (HE6) on the RQF. For an RPCL exemption, your prior learning must be at these same levels to be recognised.

Your previous study will already have been assessed and certified as either a full or partly completed Higher Education qualification.

The maximum amount of RPCL that can be awarded towards the full BA Hons degree as credit on our undergraduate programmes is as follows:

- Up to 120 credits at Level/Stage 1
- Up to 120 credits at Level/Stage 2

Please note that:

- OCA courses are named by progression order rather than academic level on the RCF i.e. OCA Level/Stage 1 courses (e.g. Painting 1, Writing 1) are

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actually accredited at HE4, Level/Stage 2 courses at HE5 and Level/Stage 3 at HE6.

- Exemption at Level/Stage 2 is dependent upon gaining full exemption (120 credits) from Level/Stage 1 study.
- You cannot gain exemption from any Level/Stage 3 study.
- You would be enrolled onto a BA (Hons) degree, and cannot be selectively enrolled onto a CertHE, DipHE or Ordinary degree.
- Only study at Higher Education Level/Stage 1 or above is transferable. We cannot transfer non-art related subjects, so a Higher National Diploma (HND) in Science for example would not be eligible.
- All previous certified learning must have been awarded within the last five years from the date on your transcript/certificate.
- Your previous study must be mapped/matched across to the equivalent OCA course unit(s).
- You must enrol onto your chosen degree programme within the same academic year as the award of RPL credit.
- If your credits have been achieved outside of the UK, you will need to obtain a Statement of Comparability report from [UK ENIC](#).
- The maximum RPCL credit that can be counted toward a subsidiary exit award eg Cert/DipHE is 50%

Depending on the degree programme you wish to study and gain exemption from, you may need to apply for exemption from core course units and select relevant elective units or apply for exemption from a specific set of units. Please check the Programme Specification for your intended degree programme, and the corresponding Unit Descriptors, to find out which course units you need to research in order to inform your application.

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There are four factors which may affect the level of credit you are awarded:

Factor One: Course Mapping

Your prior learning must map/match to equivalent OCA course unit(s). If it is not clear from the evidence provided what was involved in your prior study, then we may contact you for additional information.

Factor Two: Future study path

Your intended future study path is the other deciding factor which could affect the amount of credit awarded. For example, someone with a HND in Fine Art could look to gain the maximum 240 credit exemption if they intended to complete a degree in Painting as there may be similarities in the subject areas. However, if they wished to pursue study in Photography, then they may only receive the minimum credit transfer or may not be eligible at all, as the units may not be mappable to the units offered on the new degree programme.

Factor three: Selection of creative work

RPCL candidates for all subjects must upload a sample of their creative work for review, alongside their certificates (to a digital folder which will be shared with them post-application). This should be accompanied by a short statement explaining the context of each of the selected works. If this work is not of sufficient higher education standard for the level sought, even if supporting transcripts/certificates are at the required level, exemption from OCA course unit(s) may not be granted.

Factor four: Average level mark of previous study

Applicants must provide a transcript of the marks obtained from previous study. If the average level mark is below 50% then we may require additional evidence from you to support your application. This ensures OCA can provide any further support such as communications with the Programme Leader to ensure applicants understand the next stage requirements.

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How do I apply for RPCL?

To apply for RPCL you will need to complete an APL application form on the OCA website which will initiate the process to seek exemption from one of our degree programmes by evidencing prior certified learning.

See the *Credit Exemptions* page of the OCA website here:

<https://www.oca.ac.uk/credit-exemptions/>

What are the charges for RPCL applications?

There is a standard £250 fee for application. This fee is charged regardless of whether your application is successful or not.

When can I submit my RPCL application?

You can submit an application at any time during the year, but applications can only be accepted prior to study with OCA.

How do I submit my application for RPCL?

After you have applied for RPCL, we will make arrangements to collect the relevant payment for the process (details of which are outlined in the application form). Upon receipt of payment, we will then provide you with a digital folder into which you can upload your required documentation.

What happens after I have applied?

Once you have submitted a full RPCL application, we will acknowledge receipt and then process your application. Your application will be presented to a member of OCA's Academic Staff, who will review your application and make a recommendation of what exemption you should be awarded.

Following approval, the application will be passed to our Principal and Head of Quality and Academic Support for their sign-off. We will then send you a detailed breakdown letter, advising you which course unit(s) you have been given exemption from and which course unit(s) you must then study to obtain your

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chosen degree. The credit exemption you are awarded will be registered with our accrediting university.

How long will it take to receive the outcome of my application?

We aim to get an answer to you within a maximum of 12 weeks of receiving your application and will contact you via email.

What if I do not agree with the outcome of my RPCL application?

Please note that you cannot appeal the outcome of your RPCL application if it questions the academic judgement of the member of OCA Academic Staff.

However, if you feel that you have other grounds for appeal then please review [OCA's Academic Appeals Policy](#)

Please also note by submitting an RPCL application, OCA reserves the right to use any or all of your application as an example for future potential applicants. OCA advises that in order to comply with GDPR and Data Protection legislation that the application would be redacted and anonymised to ensure there was no identifying data available to other applicants.