

Active Study Policy From August 2024

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1. Policy Summary

- 1.1. OCA supports access to learning, aiming to help students achieve success. To assist students in achieving their goals, OCA monitors engagement with study. This engagement enables OCA to affect wellbeing, progression, and attainment.
- 1.2. OCA uses data from engagement with OCA systems to provide active interventions and support students in need.
- 1.3. In addition OCA has regulatory requirements to monitor activity for reporting purposes to Office for Students (OfS), and Student Loans Company (SLC) (hereafter referred to as Student Finance) among others.

2. Scope

2.1. What does this policy cover?

- 2.1.1. This policy applies to all students studying undergraduate and postgraduate courses at OCA when they are enrolled to a unit. Certain sections and/or paragraphs may relate to specific students; where this is the case this will be clearly identified.
- 2.1.2. The policy covers engagement with OCA systems and services that we use to identify active engagement.
- 2.1.3. This policy covers and outlines required engagement for specific funding purposes, for example through Student Finance England, Wales, and Northern Ireland, and the Student Awards Agency Scotland (SAAS).

2.2. What does this policy not cover?

- 2.2.1. This policy does not apply when students are between units (when students are waiting to be assessed, or are 'interrupted'), and it does not apply during periods of pre-agreed study breaks while enrolled to a unit (deferrals).
- 2.2.2. This policy does not cover engagement with systems and services not provided by OCA that may be connected to your learning.

3. General Principles

- 3.1. Students enrolling onto a course of study with OCA need to remain engaged with their studies throughout. Active engagement with study increases the prospects for success.

- 3.2. OCA is committed to helping students succeed. This policy focuses on how OCA can best assist students to engage and progress in their studies.
- 3.3. OCA monitors engagement in order to provide support to students. Where there are gaps in interaction with OCA services and support, these flag up intervention points that OCA uses to get in touch and provide support.
- 3.4. As OCA receives public funding through Student Finance and the Office for Students (OfS), OCA is required to report ongoing engagement with studies. This is a requirement for any student in receipt of funding through Student Finance.

4. Reporting Duties

- 4.1. OCA is required by the [Higher Education and Research Act 2017](#) to report to the Higher Education Statistics Agency (HESA), as the designated data body for Higher Education in England, details of students at OCA at set points each academic year, including engagement with studies. This information is collated with information from The Open University for the submission to HESA and is also provided to the OfS as detailed within the OCA's [privacy notice](#).
- 4.2. If you are in receipt of funding through any of the national funding bodies in the UK (Student Finance England, Wales, or Northern Ireland, or Student Awards Agency Scotland (SAAS)) you will have [specific conditions attached to your funding](#). This includes required engagement from you as well as including that OCA reports details of your study engagement. At three points in each academic year, OCA is required to report to Student Finance the status of each student in receipt of funding.
- 4.3. Student Finance and other relevant organisations require ongoing interaction with studies in order for tuition fees and/or maintenance payments to be released. For details on how engagement is defined by OCA and monitored please see section 5.

5. Active Engagement

- 5.1. OCA defines active engagement with studies as interaction with one or more services provided by OCA in order for students to complete their studies.

- 5.2. OCA monitors engagement on a 60-day rolling basis; you must have demonstrated some engagement with your studies during this period for OCA to confirm your participation or attendance.
- 5.3. In any 60 day period students enrolled on a unit/module need to interact with OCA in at least one of the following ways:
 - 5.3.1. Submitting an Assignment/Project through OCA Learn
 - 5.3.2. Accessing unit materials via OCA Learn
 - 5.3.3. Attending a tutorial or other academic support
 - 5.3.4. Engagement with the Learner Support Team to support academic progress
 - 5.3.5. Update to learning log/reflective commentary hosted on OCA systems
 - 5.3.6. Submitting work for formal assessment
- 5.4. Active engagement only applies if you are currently enrolled to a unit. If you have finished a unit and not yet enrolled to the next, paragraph 5.3 does not apply.
- 5.5. If you have applied for and been granted a deferral or extended interruption from the Extenuating Circumstances Policy, paragraph 5.3 does not apply.
- 5.6. OCA checks monthly if you have engaged with the defined interactions (5.3.1 to 5.3.6). Where we have evidence of engagement OCA can confirm active ongoing engagement for reporting purposes.
- 5.7. If you have not engaged with your studies (through one or more of the interactions listed in 5.3.1 to 5.3.6) during any 60 day period, OCA will be in touch with you to support.

6. Non-Engagement - Support

- 6.1. If you are not engaged with your studies, this triggers OCA support services to contact you.
- 6.2. OCA will initially email your OCA and personal email addresses and you will be given 10 working days to respond. This can be to engage with one or more indicators (paragraph 5.3.1 to 5.3.6) or seek support if needed.
- 6.3. If there are extenuating circumstances preventing you from engaging effectively, you can discuss your options with the Learner Support Team (learnersupport@oca.ac.uk). This could include, but is not limited to, applying for a deferral (study break) if it is not possible to study,

discussion of reasonable adjustments due to disability, or support to apply for [DSA \(Disabled Students Allowance\)](#) if applicable. If the circumstances are health or disability related and expected to continue for some time, the [Fitness to Study policy](#) may also be appropriate.

7. Non-Engagement - Withdrawal

- 7.1. After you have been contacted by OCA (paragraph 6.2) and you do not contact OCA or engage with studies within those 10 working days, you will be classed as not in engagement.
- 7.2. If you are in receipt of funding from a third-party provider (for example Student Finance England, Wales, or Northern Ireland), you will be confirmed as not in attendance with the funding provider where applicable.
- 7.3. OCA will contact you to give you 30 days formal notice of withdrawal due to non-engagement (see paragraph 9.4 of the [Terms and Conditions](#)) by email.
- 7.4. If you do not re-engage with studies or support within the 30 days you will be withdrawn from the unit and qualification you are enrolled to.
- 7.5. Once a pending withdrawal notification has been sent, if engagement is re-established prior to withdrawal, you will be required to submit and agree to a study plan of engagement in order to continue unless the Learner Support Team feels an alternative course of action is appropriate due to mitigating circumstances.

8. Fee Liability

- 8.1. If you are withdrawn from study due to non-engagement no reduction of fee liability or refund is due (paragraph 5.9 of the [Student Fees Policy](#)).

9. Appeals

- 9.1. Students may only appeal an academic decision where there are specific grounds relating to the fairness or adequacy of the procedures followed, including the consideration of all relevant evidence, the correct application of rules, how a decision was communicated, bias, and whether the decision was one which, in all the circumstances, it was reasonable for OCA to have made. Full details of how to make this request is contained in OCA's [Academic Appeals Policy and Procedure](#).

10. If you need support

- 10.1. If you require any support with this policy you should contact the Learner Support Team at learnersupport@oca.ac.uk or 01226 978618 to discuss at the earliest opportunity.

11. Linked and other policies and legislation

- 11.1. This policy is subject to [OCA's Terms and Conditions](#).
- 11.2. This policy references the [Higher Education and Research Act 2017](#).
- 11.3. In addition, the policy references the [Academic Regulations for Subsidiary Institutions of The Open University](#), [Fitness to Study Policy](#), [Student Accessibility Policy](#), [Student Fees Policy](#), [Refund Policy](#), [Academic Appeals Policy](#) and [Student Complaints and Non-Academic Appeals Policy](#).

12. Changes since previous policy

- 12.1. Transfer of policy to new policy template.
- 12.2. Amendments to wording for clarity and ease of reading.
- 12.3. Refunds section now called Fee Liability.
- 12.4. Removal of Postgraduate section (combined into Active Engagement section).
- 12.5. Change of 90 day monitoring period to 60 days.