

# Student Accessibility Policy From August 2024

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## 1. Policy Summary

1.1. The Open College of the Arts (OCA) places accessibility, in its broadest sense, at the heart of what we do. OCA pursues a policy of open access to courses, and as such we are committed to making arts education accessible from course materials to learning design. This policy sets out our approach to accessibility, how we design our curriculum to be accessible, and how we go about making adjustments for those who have specific needs.

## 2. Scope

### 2.1. What does this policy cover?

- 2.1.1. This policy applies to all applicants and students on OCA short and foundation courses, and undergraduate and postgraduate degree programmes.
- 2.1.2. The policy covers anyone with specific accessibility needs and how these interact with their studies. This includes applicants and students with disabilities and those with long-term physical and mental health conditions.
- 2.1.3. The policy covers the approaches that OCA takes to ensure accessibility, covering course design, reasonable adjustments, and communications.

### 2.2. What does this policy not cover?

- 2.2.1. This policy, whilst discussing our approach to accessibility in general terms, does not specifically cover students studying in secure learning environments; please refer to OCA's [Criminal Convictions Policy](#) for details.

## 3. General Principles

- 3.1. OCA anticipatory duties include work to embed accessibility into the curriculum design and delivery as a whole. This stems from website presentation to learning design, in providing an inclusive learning environment that benefits all students.
- 3.2. OCA anticipates the needs of students with specific access requirements, designing the curriculum and learning activities to remove barriers.

- 3.3. OCA aims to help all students, regardless of background, to achieve success as defined by each individual. This involves proactively identifying, and then removing barriers to successful engagement.
- 3.4. As an inclusive environment, accessibility is a standing item on OCA groups and formal structures, and integrated into the learning design process. We aim to meet the highest accessibility standards and provide materials in multiple formats to help meet student needs.
- 3.5. Where students/applicants require additional adjustments to be made to meet their needs, OCA will treat them with fairness and respect, in exploring the best available solution to meeting their accessibility needs.
- 3.6. We encourage all applicants and students to discuss with OCA their specific learning needs as early as possible so that we may best support you in identifying solutions to your accessibility needs. We encourage students to declare any support that they need during the enrolment process, by submitting a [Disability Support Form](#).
- 3.7. Accessibility means that we can make changes to the course content, the way in which it is delivered, and assessed. What we cannot change are the learning outcomes for each course unit, which is what your work will be judged against.
- 3.8. OCA makes provision under this policy to meet our obligations under the [Equality Act 2010](#). Specifically this is to make reasonable adjustments for people with specific accessibility needs. This can be a disability, long term health condition, or other accessibility needs.

#### **4. Accessible Learning - Curriculum Design**

- 4.1. OCA learning materials are designed to be as fully accessible as possible and compliant with accessibility legislation.
- 4.2. Accessibility is considered at each stage of the learning design process. It also forms a key aspect of quality assurance, with reviews to ensure accessibility before study options are released.
- 4.3. To ensure that we embed accessibility as a core principle at

OCA, accessibility is a standing item on OCAs Curriculum Design Group and Curriculum and Quality Committee. This makes accessibility a key consideration in the learning design, course commissioning, and quality assurance procedures.

- 4.4. For each course unit, OCA produces a Unit Accessibility Statement which is a detailed consideration of the course, the formats it is delivered in, how tutorials and group sessions are delivered, what to expect from assignments or projects, and other related accessibility information. These key statements will help students to make informed decisions about their learning journey, and enable OCA to assist in making reasonable adjustments where needed. Each Unit Accessibility Statement is available on the specific [degree course pages](#) information on OCA's website.
- 4.5. OCA course materials are primarily hosted and accessed through our virtual learning environment, OCA Learn. This delivers OCA course materials with the availability of multiple formats including audio and visual content, interactive learning materials. In addition, through OCA Learn students can access all file-based content in Ebook (MOBI or ePub formats for viewing through screen readers/kindle and so on); mp3 Audio; electronic braille, and [DAISY \(a Digital Talking Books standard\)](#) formats.

## 5. Reasonable Adjustments

- 5.1. OCA recognises that even with the anticipatory design activities that we utilise, there will be a need for some students/applicants to have adjustments made to better facilitate their access to the course.
- 5.2. You are encouraged to inform OCA of any disabilities or accessibility needs where there is an impact on your ability to study when you enrol or apply. As part of the enrolment process you will be invited to provide this information and speak to our Learner Support Team before you begin your studies. After registration should you require additional support or have a change in circumstances you can tell us either by emailing [learnersupport@oca.ac.uk](mailto:learnersupport@oca.ac.uk) or by completing our [Disability Support Form](#) in the Student Handbook. You are also asked about disabilities and long term health conditions as part of application and enrolment; this is for statutory reporting purposes to the Office for Students and Higher Education Statistics

Agency.

- 5.3. You do not necessarily need evidence in order to access support, but having that evidence will assist OCA staff in providing support and individual solutions. For certain reasonable adjustments we may require evidence, either through a Needs Assessment report, GP letters, medical diagnoses, or other evidence provided by a suitably qualified professional. Where this is required we will tell you.
- 5.4. Where possible, OCA recommends that applicants and students apply for [Disabled Student's Allowance \(DSA\)](#). DSA has access to lots of resources that help provide access to learning.
- 5.5. If you are applying for DSA, OCA recommends this be done before you start your course and to wait to start until that support has been put in place. If you wish to start studying before DSA is in place, please speak to Learner Support about what you will need to study by contacting [learnersupport@oca.ac.uk](mailto:learnersupport@oca.ac.uk).
- 5.6. You can access support for your disabilities and accessibility needs through the [Student Handbook](#) on OCA Learn, including [OCA's Disability Support Form](#) which you can use to tell us about your support needs.
- 5.7. OCA can make a number of reasonable adjustments in place to support students with their studies. These are general adjustments including extra time and adjustments to the format of certain assignments and so on. OCA will put these in place following a request from you either through our [Disability Support Form](#) or if you contact the Learner Support team directly at [learnersupport@oca.ac.uk](mailto:learnersupport@oca.ac.uk):
  - 5.7.1. Printed course materials in differing font and font size, or on coloured paper,
  - 5.7.2. Electronic course materials available for use with assistive technology,
  - 5.7.3. Additional time for assignments subject to the overall study timeframes. This may be:-
    - 5.7.3.1. Up to 3 months per unit for Foundations, Undergraduate and Personal Development study;
    - 5.7.3.2. Up to 2 weeks per course for Short Courses;
    - 5.7.3.3. Up to 2 weeks per course unit for Postgraduate study.

- 5.7.4. Adjustments to the format of assignment tasks e.g. undertaking a presentation instead of an essay or group work,
  - 5.7.5. Adjustments to exercises and projects requiring access to primary sources,
  - 5.7.6. Adjustments to the format of tutorials or feedback,
  - 5.7.7. Recordings of tutorials (1-2-1 and/or group tutorials).
- 5.8. Where you may require other reasonable adjustments in addition to anything outlined above, please speak to the Learner Support team at [learnersupport@oca.ac.uk](mailto:learnersupport@oca.ac.uk) who will be able to go through with you in detail how OCA can support you.
- 5.9. Where you need adjustments we will aim to provide your preferred support needs, however on occasion this may not be possible. Where it is not possible to provide you with your preferred adjustment we will explain why and attempt to source a suitable alternative.
- 5.10. Details of reasonable adjustments requested and put in place will regularly be fed back and reported to OCA's Curriculum Development Group for consideration on how OCA can build these aspects into learning design.

## 6. Accessible Communications

- 6.1. OCA recognises the importance of ensuring that all of our public facing information, particularly through the OCA website, is fully accessible and meets the required standards of the Public Sector Bodies (Website and Mobile Applications) (No.2) Accessibility Regulations 2018; see our [Accessibility Statement](#) for details.
- 6.2. The OCA website, online learning environments, and other public facing media including any apps in use are designed and updated to meet the [Web Content Accessibility Guidelines \(WCAG\) 2.2 AA standard](#).
- 6.3. In communicating with students we will provide proactive information in a timely manner, allowing students time to digest information.
- 6.4. We will utilise a number of communications channels and formats for messages to ensure that all students can access information in a way that is useful and engaging for them. For example, major announcements will always be emailed to

you, and accompanied with further information on [our blog](#), or on OCA Learn.

- 6.5. Where students have specific accessibility needs we will inform them of the provisions they can expect from OCA and how we will support them.

## 7. If you need support

- 7.1. If you need support you should contact the Learner Support Team at [learnersupport@oca.ac.uk](mailto:learnersupport@oca.ac.uk) or 01226 978618 to discuss reasonable adjustments at the earliest opportunity.

## 8. Linked and other policies and legislation

- 8.1. This policy is subject to OCA's [Terms and Conditions](#).
- 8.2. This policy should be read in conjunction with other OCA policies, namely [Criminal Convictions Policy](#), [Admissions Policy](#), [Assessment Policy](#), [Fitness to Study Policy](#), [Safeguarding Policy](#), [Student Code of Conduct](#), and [Academic Regulations for Subsidiary Institutions of The Open University](#).
- 8.3. This policy references the [Equality Act 2010](#), [Public Sector Equality Duty](#), and the [Public Sector Bodies \(Website and Mobile Applications\) \(No.2\) Accessibility Regulations 2018](#).

## 9. Changes since previous policy

- 9.1. Transfer of policy to new policy template.
- 9.2. Tweaks to wording to improve clarity and accessibility.
- 9.3. Removal of paragraph 4.8 (duplication).
- 9.4. Removal of paragraph 6.9 (defunct).