

# Progression and Continuation Policy

## From August 2025

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## 1. Policy Summary

- 1.1. This policy sets out how OCA students progress from one unit to another within a programme of study that leads to a qualification.
- 1.2. OCA operates an open access policy. This means you do not need specific experience or qualifications to join most OCA study options. The progression and continuation rules in this policy are designed to support your study journey.
- 1.3. These rules and limitations are also in place to limit any financial liability you may incur if you were to progress or continue.
- 1.4. The OCA curriculum is designed to be sequential, with each subsequent aspect of study supported by what has come before. This is to help you understand the material before moving on to further study.
- 1.5. There are specific limitations in place around progression and continuation to ensure that you have sufficient time to reflect and develop key skills that enhance your learning.

## 2. Scope

### 2.1. What does this policy cover?

- 2.1.1. This policy applies to all students studying undergraduate or postgraduate degrees at OCA, who enrolled to a unit from August 2023 onwards.
- 2.1.2. Some OCA courses run with a fixed start and end date, known as cohorts. These have specific rules for progression and are covered separately in section 4.
- 2.1.3. This policy covers progression from one unit to another, and continuation from one stage of study to another.
- 2.1.4. The policy also covers assessment rules regarding progression, in relation to resubmissions and retakes.

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

- 2.2.1. This policy does not apply to students studying non-accredited provision at OCA, on short or foundation courses.

## 3. Undergraduate degree students

- 3.1. This section applies if you are enrolled to study an undergraduate degree that leads to a BA (Hons) qualification.

- 3.2. You need to have completed the study elements of the unit you are enrolled on, before progressing to your next unit. This is because OCA courses are designed to be sequential.
- 3.3. When you complete a unit with OCA you may provisionally continue to your next unit, without first being formally assessed.
  - 3.3.1. The exception to 3.2 is if your completed unit is the first unit on an undergraduate degree at OCA. This applies whether you are at Stage 1 (HE4), or have been granted advanced entry through Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL). In this circumstance, you must be formally assessed and receive your ratified assessment result before you can start the next unit. This is to give students time to adapt to studying with OCA, through distance learning.
    - 3.3.1.1. You can submit an enrolment whilst waiting for your assessment results, and complete all other procedures relating to enrolment (including funding). Any enrolments we receive whilst you are waiting to be assessed will be kept on hold, and processed once you have received a successful assessment outcome.
  - 3.3.2. If you progress from one unit to the next unit, without waiting for assessment results, you will be responsible for the fees for that new unit. Please see the Fee Liability section for exclusions.

#### **4. Cohorted courses and changing study intensity**

- 4.1. Some OCA courses run with a fixed start and end date. These are known as cohorted courses and include Certificates of Higher Education taken as a standalone qualification and Masters degrees.
- 4.2. These courses have defined windows of engagement where you can join them. Once you have completed one unit you will automatically progress to the next unit that makes up your course, according to the course schedule.
- 4.3. In extenuating circumstances, you may be able to defer the start of your next unit on a cohorted course. You would in these circumstances, leave the cohort you are currently studying with, and re-join a later cohort. For the details of extenuating circumstances, eligibility, and requirements, please refer to the [Extenuating Circumstances Policy](#).

#### 4.4. *Changing study intensity*

4.4.1. Cohorted courses may be run at different study intensities, for example full-time and part-time. Depending on where you are in your course you may be able to change your study intensity, either increasing or decreasing to an alternate offered pace of study.

4.4.1.1. *Full-time* is defined as the rate of study intensity equivalent to studying 120 credits in one academic year at undergraduate level, and 180 credits in one academic year at postgraduate level.

4.4.1.2. *Part-time* is defined as the rate of study intensity equivalent to studying 60 credits in one academic year at undergraduate level, and 90 credits in one academic year at postgraduate level.

4.4.2. Once the course has started changing study intensity is permitted at set points in the course schedule. If you change intensity of study there may be required deferrals or breaks in study applied so you can rejoin with the correct cohort. For full details please see please refer to the [Extenuating Circumstances Policy](#).

4.4.3. If you are within the 14 day cancellation period, which runs up to the end of the induction period for your course, you can switch between different study intensities. To make the change you need to contact [studentadvice@oca.ac.uk](mailto:studentadvice@oca.ac.uk).

4.4.4. If you are enrolled on a full-time cohort and wish to switch to a part-time cohort you may do so up to the end of the third week of the teaching schedule. To make this change please contact [studentadvice@oca.ac.uk](mailto:studentadvice@oca.ac.uk) with your request.

### 5. **Progression at Assessment**

5.1. Once you have completed your unit you must submit work from that unit for summative assessment. You must be assessed at the first assessment event, following your completion. Details of the deadlines for assessment are available in the [Assessment Guidance](#) course on OCA Learn.

5.2. If you do not submit work for assessment you will receive a mark of 0 (paragraph 4.6 of the Summative Assessment Policy), and be able to resubmit for a capped mark (paragraph 7.3 of the Summative

Assessment Policy, and 17.3.1 of the Academic Regulations for Subsidiary Institutions of The Open University). The exception to this is where:

- 5.2.1. If you have applied for deferral of assessment through OCAs [Extenuating Circumstances Policy](#) and have been approved by the Extenuating Circumstances Panel, you must submit work for assessment and meet all assessment criteria at the second assessment event following the completion date of your unit.
- 5.3. If you provisionally progress to a new unit without waiting for assessment results (paragraph 3.2), you will be required to meet the assessment rules for the old unit. This means you must be assessed at the next assessment event, after you've completed that unit, and fulfill all the assessment requirements for submission.
- 5.4. If you do not submit for assessment, or do not submit all required assessment components, the unit you have progressed to will be paused. Your unit will be paused until you have successfully passed the previous unit at assessment.
- 5.5. If you do not achieve the minimum required pass mark of 40% for undergraduate units and 50% for postgraduate units and you have provisionally progressed to the next unit then:
  - 5.5.1. Any ongoing units will be deferred whilst you prepare, submit work at assessment, and successfully pass as either a resubmission or retake of the failed unit.
    - 5.5.1.1. If you are required to resubmit work for assessment (paragraph 17.3 of the [Academic Regulations for Subsidiary Institutions of The Open University](#)) this must be resubmitted at the [next available assessment event](#) after you have received your assessment outcome. No deferral of assessment is possible under these circumstances.
    - 5.5.1.2. If you are required to retake a unit and submit for assessment (paragraph 17.4 of the [Academic Regulations for Subsidiary Institutions of The Open University](#)), you must have started on your unit retake within 6 months of receiving your assessment results.. Following completion of the unit you will be required to submit work the [next available assessment event](#). No

deferral of assessment is possible under these circumstances.

- 5.6. If you are unsuccessful at assessment and subsequently exhausted all available assessment opportunities for resubmission and retake on a core unit, you will be withdrawn from all units you are currently enrolled to and any associated award (see the 'Withdrawal by OCA' section of the relevant [Terms and Conditions](#)). This includes specific registration with the awarding body where applicable.

## 6. Fee Liability

- 6.1. If you engage with and exhaust all opportunities for assessment on a core undergraduate unit (paragraph 8.4), **and** have provisionally progressed to another unit, you will not be liable for fees for the unit you have progressed to.

## 7. Appeals

- 7.1. There is no automatic right of appeal against a decision made in line with this policy, except where you believe an administrative error has been made. You may request an administrative appeal as set out in OCA's [Student Complaints and Non-Academic Appeals Procedure](#).

## 8. Glossary of terms

- 8.1. *Progression* is defined as the advancement from one stage of a degree programme to an adjacent higher stage.
- 8.2. *Continuation* is defined as the completion of one unit of study and moving to the next unit within the same stage of study.
- 8.3. *Completion* is defined as the unit being confirmed by a member of the OCA teaching team as all required projects / assignments having been submitted and formative feedback received.
- 8.4. *Completion date* is defined as the date upon which formative feedback for the final assignment/project on a given unit is returned to a student, and determines their eligibility to be included at the next available assessment.
- 8.5. *Assessment* is defined as the submission of work created during a unit of study for formal assessment, mapped against learning outcomes. This is reviewed by assessors and external examiners for the purpose of achieving credit towards a qualification.
- 8.6. *Assessment outcome* is the date where you receive your ratified result following an Exam Board.

- 8.7. *Submission date* is defined as the date by which work must have been submitted to OCA for a formal assessment event. Details on assessment timings can be found on [OCA Learn](#).
- 8.8. *Core Unit* is defined as a required part of the programme structure, specified by the Programme Specification.
- 8.9. *Cohort* refers to a group of students who study a course collectively, according to a study schedule with a fixed start and end date.
- 9. If you need support**
- 9.1. If you are a disabled student and you would like to receive this procedure in an alternative format please contact the OCA's [Learner Support team](#). You should also contact the Learner Support team if you wish to discuss any reasonable adjustments to these procedures to take into account your disability and any additional support you may need.
- 9.2. If you live in Wales and require this policy in the Welsh language then please contact [enquiries@oca.ac.uk](mailto:enquiries@oca.ac.uk).
- 10. Linked and other policies and legislation**
- 10.1. This policy references the [Academic Regulations for Subsidiary Institutions of The Open University](#), [Terms and Conditions](#), [Recognition of Prior Learning](#), [Extenuating Circumstances Policy](#), [Student Fees Policy](#), and [Student Accessibility Policy](#).
- 10.2. Students can find useful information relating to [assessment](#) and [study planning](#) within OCA Learn.
- 11. Changes since previous policy**
- 11.1. Introduction of new section 4 - Cohorted courses and changes to study intensity.
- 11.2. Removal of Postgraduate section.
- 11.3. Introduction of paragraph 2.1.2.
- 11.4. Introduction of paragraphs 3.1 and 3.2.
- 11.5. Paragraphs 3.5-3.7 moved to section 7 (Assessment).
- 11.6. Paragraph 8.1 re-written for clarity.
- 11.7. Introduction of paragraph 10.9.