

University for the Creative Arts

Open College of the Arts (OCA)

Periodic Review on 12 June 2020 via Zoom of:

BA Creative Arts

BA Creative Writing

BA Painting

BA Photography

BA Textiles

BA Visual Communications

## Periodic Review report

### 1. Introduction

1.1 The purpose of the event was to review the courses in the table below in accordance with the terms of reference as detailed in section 2 below.

| Course                          | Date first validated | Type of event   | Date last reviewed |
|---------------------------------|----------------------|-----------------|--------------------|
| BA (Hons) Creative Arts         | 2011/12              | Periodic Review | 2014/15            |
| BA (Hons) Creative Writing      |                      |                 |                    |
| BA (Hons) Painting              |                      |                 |                    |
| BA (Hons) Photography           |                      |                 |                    |
| BA (Hons) Textiles              |                      |                 |                    |
| BA (Hons) Visual Communications |                      |                 |                    |

1.2 The panel was provided with the review documentation in the format required by the University.

1.3 The panel were provided with introductory recorded presentations for each of the courses being reviewed in advance of the event. The panel also received an overview presentation about the OCA and the overarching changes being made, plus a tour of the Virtual Learning Environment (VLE).

## 2. Outcome

2.1 In accordance with its terms of reference, the panel considered that the courses were:

- a) achieving their stated aims and learning outcomes;
- b) healthy in terms of the overall student satisfaction and access to learning opportunities (including progression and achievement);
- c) appropriate in terms of the academic content, learning environment and proposed facilities;
- d) appropriately consulted key stakeholders;
- e) appropriately aligned to QAA UK Quality Code, with specific reference to Subject Benchmark Statements and the FHEQ;
- f) aligned to the UCA regulatory context.

2.2 The panel recommends to the Academic Quality Committee (AQC):

| <b>Course</b>                   | <b>Period of validation</b> | <b>Number of conditions</b> | <b>Number of recommendations</b> | <b>Next periodic review<sup>[1]</sup></b> |
|---------------------------------|-----------------------------|-----------------------------|----------------------------------|---|
| BA (Hons) Creative Arts         | 5 years                     | 0                           | 6                                | 2024/25                                   |
| BA (Hons) Creative Writing      |                             |                             |                                  |   |
| BA (Hons) Painting              |                             |                             |                                  |   |
| BA (Hons) Photography           |                             |                             |                                  |   |
| BA (Hons) Textiles              |                             |                             |                                  |   |
| BA (Hons) Visual Communications |                             |                             |                                  |   |

2.3 The courses were validated for the periods stated above from the date of the review meeting (effective from 2020/21<sup>[2]</sup>), subject to addressing the outcomes specified below and the correction of course documentation listed in the summary of regulatory and documentation issues in Appendix A.

2.4 The deadline for meeting the conditions and any issues highlighted in Appendix A below is Friday 3 July 2020<sup>[3]</sup>.

2.5 Commendations and good practice:

The panel commended OCA on the following:

- a) the development of the 3 by 3 course structure
- b) the proposal of the Enterprise Hub
- c) the use of study visits
- d) their entrepreneurial and social mission, and the use of students' learned experiences.

2.6 Conditions (to be addressed by the deadline highlighted above for approval by the Panel Chair or other Panel members as agreed at the event):

There were no conditions set.

2.7 Recommendations (to be addressed in the Course Action Plans as part of annual monitoring for consideration by the OCA Curriculum Quality Committee (CQC)):

|  |
|--|
| Recommendation 1   |
| Clearly articulate the nature of the Enterprise Hub within each set of course documents.   |
| <p>Explanation:</p> <p>Within the course documents the Enterprise Hub was described as a central reference point for OCA and all courses. The panel felt that the development of the Enterprise Hub would be for the betterment of all courses and that the work to develop this should continue.</p> <p>The Director of Learning and Teaching at OCA explained that the Enterprise Hub would be about pooling resources into a collective space. The work to develop this is ongoing and would be based on what is already available for another of the OCA BA courses, Garden Design. The Enterprise Hub would not just be about employability but would also consider the differing needs of all students, some of whom may just want to exhibit their work.</p> <p>The panel considered that the way in which the Enterprise Hub would work for each individual course could be better articulated within the course documentation.</p> <p>OCA response:</p> <p>The following narrative has been added to Section F of the Programme Specs</p> |

OCA recognises that its current student body holds a broad range of employment and enterprise aspirations. A large proportion of students already have established careers, many see their studies as a change in career direction, and for an increasing number of younger students, as a first step into their chosen creative career. As distance learners, OCA students are located across the UK and internationally and consequently have differing levels of resources and opportunity. 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. 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.

An Enterprise Hub will provide

opportunities for engagement with external organisations, through project work, as well as the potential for business incubators, mentoring options, internship opportunities and enable access to seed-funding. Learning materials and activities provides a framework for students to define, establish and sustain their practices at a variety of scales and ambitions, and support students to think about freelance, employment, social enterprises, or entrepreneurship outcomes.

A key benefit of distance learning is that you can build self-sustaining ways of developing a creative practice by balancing study/work/life commitments, by establishing studio spaces and resources throughout your studies, and by growing creative and professional networks. To encourage this, learning activities are in place to help initiate and sustain studies and professional practice throughout the course, and collaborative projects are there to bring students together through group work.

## Recommendation 2

Provide all students with access to study visits (for example through use of recordings and the VLE).

Explanation:

During the meeting with students, as well as in the student consultation feedback provided in advance of the event, the panel noted that study visits were valued by students as part of their courses.

During the focus group meeting, students noted that although there had been plenty of online visits recently, accessing and participating in some of these had been difficult as all places on the visit had filled up very quickly, sometimes before they had seen that they were available. Students also noted that depending upon their location physical visits could be difficult to attend.

Course teams noted that online events had been successful and that they were considering whether these could be built into scheduled teaching in the future.

As the visits were highly valued by students the panel felt that recording the visits and posting them to the VLE could be a way to ensure that more visits were accessible to all students. This would mean that if a student was unable to attend the visit (or join online) they would still be able to watch back at a later date.

OCA response:

Added info to Teaching and Learning strategy in all programme specs

### Recommendation 3

Provide information about standard tutor contact and feedback expectations to all students.

#### Explanation:

During the meeting with students, as well as in the student consultation feedback provided in advance of the event, the panel noted comments from students about the quality and amount of contact with, and feedback from, tutors.

The students that the panel met with were generally positive about their experiences and were satisfied with the level of contact and feedback provided, however they mentioned that this varied dependent upon the tutor that had been allocated and that they were aware that not all students had had the same positive experience. Some students noted that they had used the learner support department in the main OCA office to assist them with getting a response from their tutor.

During the meeting with course teams, OCA stated that they were considering providing more regular points at which tutors would contact students (perhaps monthly).

The panel felt that all students should be provided with information that lays out the standard expectations for tutor contact and feedback so that they are aware of what their entitlement to tutor support and feedback is.

#### OCA response:

Tweaked Teaching and Learning strategy in all programme specs

Recommendation 4

Ensure information is provided to all students about how and where they can access support services.

Explanation:

Panel members asked the student focus group about support for wellbeing/mental health. The students noted that overall tutors had been supportive but that this varied depending upon the tutor allocated.

The panel felt that it was important to ensure that all students were aware of the support available to them from OCA.

OCA response:

Added info to Teaching and Learning strategy in all programme specs

## Recommendation 5

Improve signposting of resources to students.

### Explanation:

The panel discussed with student focus group their access to resources both from OCA and also outside of the course.

The students were aware of their access to the UCA online library but noted that this had been difficult to navigate. The students had differing experiences with accessing resources from other locations. Some had been able to use local libraries but others had not.

Panel members had noted that some books listed on the reading lists could be reviewed for currency. Some suggestions were provided for journals that were available electronically (for the Creative Writing course).

The Director of Teaching and Learning at OCA noted that there had been agreement that all resources listed on the reading lists would be available electronically and that all texts would also be embedded within the course activities online. He noted some future plans to consider student led reading lists, proactively involving students in the development of these to ensure greater accessibility. Course teams also noted that they had been in conversation with the link librarian about the possibility of digitising key sections of texts and that in the development of learning activities for the courses further resources would be built in.

Panel members felt that students needed to be provided with clear information about how and where they could access resources for the courses.

### OCA response:

Added info to Teaching and Learning strategy in all programme specs



|   |
|---|
| Recommendation 6  |
| Continue to pay attention to and develop the work already in progress on the curriculum with regards to diversity and decolonising the curriculum.  |
| <p>Explanation:</p> <p>The panel commended the information in the documentation relating to diversity. They felt that this was an important issue that needed continuing attention.</p> <p><b>OCA Response</b><br/> Noted, this is part of the OCA Strategy which has recently been signed off by OCA Board of Trustees. Also added info to the teaching and Learning strategy. Outlining OCA's commitment to this.</p> |

Other substantive issues discussed by the panel<sup>[4]</sup>

### **Meeting with students**

The panel met with five students from four of the courses being considered (BA Creative Writing, BA Painting, BA Photography and BA Textiles).

Panel members discussed with students some issues that had been noted through the student consultation documentation that had been provided in advance of the event. This included study visits, tutor support and feedback, and access to resources as discussed in the recommendations above.

#### Access to resources

The panel discussed with the students their access to resources through the SCONUL system. It was confirmed that currently OCA students do not have this access. It was confirmed that this was an institutional level decision and was not something individual courses had control of.

The panel also noted some comments from students about the ease of use of the UCA online system. These comments would be fed back to relevant staff members by the Director, Academic Services.

### **Meeting with course teams**

The panel met with the course teams in two groups. Each panel member had the opportunity to discuss any queries with the Programme Leader for each course. All course specific queries were resolved through these discussions.

**Documentary issues:**

**All courses**

**1. Programme Specification:**

a. Two versions of each of the programme specifications will be needed as the new units are not due to be introduced until 2021/22. The version for 2020/21 should not include reference to the new units/structure. The current existing programme specification should be used and checked to ensure that units are correct for 2020/21. (The latest versions of the programme specifications will be attached and emailed for use for this purpose.)

For 2021/22 the version presented for the periodic review event (that does include the new units/structure) should be used.

b. Period of Validation: Validation Officer to add the agreed period of validation to the finalised programme specifications post the event (for both 2020/21 versions and 2021/22 versions).

c. Overall methods of assessment and Overall Learning & Teaching hours:

i. data generated from the unit descriptors has been accurately recorded using the appropriate course stage data spreadsheets;

ii. average scheduled Learning & Teaching hours for each course = 15%.

d. Course structure: Prerequisite column is not necessary as the previous 'order of units' column covers this content.

e. Learning, Teaching and Assessment section: This section appears to be generic for all courses. Is there anything specific to each course that can be added to each of these sections?

f. Learning, Teaching and Assessment: This section refers to 'you' but all other sections of the Programme specs refer to 'students'. Please amend so that this is consistent through the document.

OCA response:

- a. This advice differs to that previously given. A further conversation and clarification is needed. We can do this, however some approvals will need to be done such as assessment and Enterprise Hub. To follow up with Head of Quality & Academic Support, OCA.
  - b. Deleted
  - c. This very much encapsulates teaching, learning and assessment at OCA, in broad brush strokes. UG courses do not vary in terms of T&L and assessment approaches. Although courses philosophy's and curriculum content does.
4. Updated - invited Programme Leaders to amend narrative

## 2. Assessment Criteria

- a. The assessment criteria in the unit descriptors are the same as those across all levels of each of the BA as well as the MA courses. This should be revised. The assessment criteria in the unit descriptors should tell students what they are expected to demonstrate for assessment of each unit and should therefore be differentiated across each level. The expectation of what a student will demonstrate will be different for Level 4 compared to Level 7.

### OCA Response

The assessment grid articulates how the assessment criteria differs across levels from HE4 – HE7

## 3. Unit Descriptors:

- a. Word counts: Please review given word counts and the equivalent number of minutes for a presentation to ensure these are consistent across all UG courses.
- b. Indicative Teaching & Learning Methods: The second bullet point refers to 'written' material. Does this mean that students receive material in hard copy? Or will material be available through the VLE.
- c. Level 4, 5 and first level 6 units (except Creative Writing): Table A1: All units list 'a selection of (practical) work' as part of the portfolio. Is there any other information that can be included to make clearer what this involves?

### Level 6 units

- d. All Level 6 units: Content: Are these units all meant to be the exactly the same across all the UG courses? Although the content section is very

similar there are some differences across units in these sections. **If** they are meant to be identical please review.

e. All Level 6 units: Content: Reference to tutor support that is included in each section could be removed from the unit descriptors and added to the Learning, Teaching and Assessment section of the programme specification. This content section should provide students with the 'new knowledge that a student may acquire' it should also 'include the key syllabus of the unit'. This section should not be about outcomes, assessment or delivery.

f. Level 6 Unit 1: Aims: All the aims are the same across all courses except for Aim 3 for Visual Communication where it differs. What is the rationale for the difference here?

g. Level 6 Unit 1: Learning Outcomes: The learning outcomes are the same across all courses except for Creative Writing where LO2 and LO3 are reversed and there are some small amends. Again, what is the rationale for the difference here?

h. Level 6 Unit 2 (Creative Writing Unit 3): Content: The final paragraph in this section states that 'unit content ... provide a structure through which you will initiate, plan, execute and disseminate your project'. This is not given in the unit descriptors. Is this referring to another document/source?

i. Level 6 Unit 2: Aims: All the aims are the same across all courses except for Visual Communication where all aims are different. What is the rationale for the differences here?

j. Level 6 Unit 3: Aims: All the aims are the same across all courses except for Visual Communication Aim 3 where there is one small difference. Should 'increasingly' be 'independence'?

k. Level 6 Unit 3: Learning Outcomes: All the learning outcomes are the same across all courses except for Photography LO1 where there is a small difference. Should this match LO1 for all other units?

l. Level 6 Units 1 and 2 (Creative Writing 1 and 3): The use of the term 'Dissertation' should be changed across all units. A dissertation is defined as 'An extended piece of written work, often the write-up of a final year-project. A dissertation is a substantial piece of **writing** derived from research that a student has undertaken. Dissertations are the result of a student's independent work, carried out under the guidance of a supervisor'. This description does not fit with the description of the task in the unit descriptors (see annex of the Quality Assurance Handbook for further guidance). (For information only (OCA not expected to adopt this unit): UCA use a set template for a dissertation unit that is an 8000 word dissertation for 30 credits). The term 'Dissertation' should be replaced with an alternative description.

m. Level 6 Unit 2 (except Creative Writing): Assessment tasks: Tasks 3 and 4 are alternatives but they do not appear to require students to do the same amount of work. Task 3 is 2000 words or a 20 min presentation and Task 4 is 4000-5000 words or a 30-40 min presentation. Alternatives should present the same amount of work for all students. Currently why would a student pick task 4 as it appears to be double the work?

OCA response:

a. Reviewed and updated

b. It can mean both. Prisoners need access to 'hard copies' of materials, whilst other students will access materials on the VLE.

c. Wording changed to 'creative work'. The detailed info is covered in the assessment guidelines sent out to students. Wording kept deliberately broad in UD to encompass the vast range of outcomes.

d. Not updated. The courses were fashioned to fit within a framework, differences and subtleties appear based on discipline specificities.

e. Updated

f. Updated for consistency

g. updated for consistency, the LOs fifer slightly in that they refer to the discipline

h. Text removed

i. Updated for consistency

j. Updated

k. Updated

l. At stage 3 OCA offers students a comparative critical writing component that allows learners - at a distance and over a longer period of time - a dissertation model. A dissertation is as important for our learners, as it is a campus-based university student, as it offers an equal footing when applying to undertake postgraduate study etc. The stage 3 UD assessment components do add up the word count of a dissertation. A dissertation at OCA is simply undertaken in digestible and accessible chunks over the duration of the first two units at Stage 3. The proposal and literature review in the first unit, and the full draft in the second. As with a campus-based support model, students work with a dedicated tutor (supervisor). For students who do not want to undertake a dissertation, the alternative of a critical review (2500 words), plus a choice of appropriate case studies, business cases, or project report is available. The equivalent word count for both dissertation/non-dissertation routes are the same:

3.1 A critical essay 2500 words

3.2 Dissertation 4000-5000words

3.3 Reflective presentation 750 words

As such we have not replaced the term 'dissertation'

m. Updated for consistency

#### **4. Migration Strategy:**

a. More detail should be added to the migration strategies to confirm the dates for first/last enrolments onto the units (ie last date for enrolments 31 August 2020, first date of enrolment 1 September 2020 etc).

b. Where the migration strategy states that a unit is to be withdrawn please again give a specific date for this.

a. It is not possible to give specific dates. These units will not necessarily be open to students from 1 September 2021, this will very much depend on the commissioning cycle. There can be commissioning issues and therefore launch dates can shift. Please see, info underneath the table.

b. Again, please see info underneath the table on Migration Strategy, 31 July can be given as a specific start date is needed.

#### **BA (Hons) Creative Arts**

##### **1. Programme Specification:**

a. Entry requirements: Where there is the reference to a Music unit in the first paragraph suggest that this is asterisked, and information included about the final availability of this unit.

b. Entry requirements: Remove Fourth paragraph starting 'Students will be required...' Not part of the standard entry criteria for OCA BA courses.

c. Subject/Qualification Benchmark Statements: Update section to include all statements referred to in Subject Benchmark Mapping document and ensure correct years are listed.

d. Course overview: This section refers to students selecting from different creative disciplines, what are these? Can some examples be given in the overview to give students more of an idea about the disciplines they might be studying?

e. Course overview: How and when do students choose the disciplines they will study? Does it have to be two (or could it be more)? What happens if they only want to choose one? This section could explain more clearly how this process works.

f. Course outcomes: Please reword to ensure these follow on from the stem 'upon successful completion of the course students are able to'.

OCA response:

- a. Updated, asterisk added
- b. Deleted
- c. Updated, now refers to: Art & Design (2017), Communication, Media, Film and Cultural Studies (2016) Music (2016) and Creative Writing (2016)
- d. Updated giving examples of disciplines
- e. Updated
- f. Updated

**2. Unit Descriptors:**

- a. All units: Content: Suggest that syllabus is listed as 'Indicative' to allow for flexibility.
- b. All units: Content: Some of the bullet points under syllabus appear to be about the ways in which students will be assessed. Suggest that this is removed and included as part of Table A1 (under assessment requirements) if not already included. This section should provide students with the 'new knowledge that a student may acquire' it should also 'include the key syllabus of the unit'. This section should not be about outcomes, assessment or delivery.
- c. Unit 1.2: Creative Arts Skills: Content: Amend reference to stage two in first paragraph to stage one.
- d. Unit 1.2: Creative Arts Skills: Content states that students will complete an online presentation of practical work but this is not included as part of the assessment requirements section. Please clarify if this is part of the assessment and if it is include as part of Table A1.
- e. Unit 1.3: Creative Arts Dimensions: Content: Amend reference to stage three in first paragraph to stage one.
- f. Unit 1.3: Creative Arts Dimensions: Content: Content refers to the 'previous thirteen parts of level one'. Please clarify what these are as there is no reference to these in the previous two units or the programme specification.
- g. Unit 1.3: Creative Arts Dimensions: Content: Amend reference to 'level one' to 'stage one' for consistency.

- h. All stage two units: Content: Please clarify what is meant by 'each stage of level two' – does this mean in each unit of stage two?
- i. All stage 2 units: Content: Themes - Do students have to pick a different theme for each unit? If yes, how will OCA ensure that they do? What happens if they don't?
- j. All stage 2 units: Content: Are the themes examples or set for the duration of the course. Could they be listed as examples to allow for flexibility/change. The more detailed information could be given in course handbooks/briefs.
- k. All stage 2 units: Content: The fourth paragraph in the content section looks to be generic across all units and is about a learning plan and preparation for assessment. As this is generic across all units could this be removed from the unit descriptors and added to the Learning, Teaching and Assessment section of the programme specification?
- l. All stage 2 units: Aims and Learning outcomes: Aims should be distinctive from other units so that there is no repetition in a year especially. Each unit should have very clear aims that establish its role in the student learning experience. Please revise aims two to four in each unit so that they are distinctive.
- (Repeated learning outcomes are considered to be academically appropriate in multiple units within a stage/level (as Art & Design education is iterative).)*
- m. Unit 2.1: Creative Arts Relations: Content: Amend reference to stage one in first paragraph to stage two.
- n. Unit 2.2: Creative Arts Perspectives: Content: Amend reference to HE5 to stage two in final paragraph.
- o. Unit 3.2: Context and Audience: Reading lists: There is nothing listed under recommended reading for this unit. Is there anything that can be included here?
- p. Unit 3.3: Major Project: Content: Amend reference to pathway in first paragraph to course.

#### OCA response

- a. Added to all unit descriptors
- b. Updated
- c. Updated



- d. it is listed under indicative task 4) in the Assessment requirements
- e. Updated
- f. Updated to be less specific, now reads: 'The unit will guide you towards building a small body of work, applying your skills to your choice of themes from your studies so far.'
- g. Updated
- h. Corrected to read: '...each unit of level two'
- i. The delivery of content for each unit will be structured through the Creative Arts learning materials on OCA Learn the virtual learning environment for the OCA. The choice of themes will be compulsory as a student reaches that stage of each unit. Tutors will be able to see which themes have already been selected and offer support with their choice of a different theme. Students will be unable to progress on the unit without selecting a theme as progression will be fenced until the student has selected and the gate opened to the next part. Students will complete 3 out of the 5 themes and themes cannot be repeated.
- j. The themes are chosen to provide a context for personal exploration for the stage 2 units. They provide a context and starting point for a wider engagement with the world (a key aspect of interdisciplinary studies). Once the theme has been introduced what the student does with it is up to them, so they are a lead into a framework to apply to their creative practice made up of two or more disciplines. For example, a student is developing a creative practice using moving image and creative writing, they start level 2.1 'Creative Arts Relations' and choose 'Growth - cities, morphology, life-cycles, environments, the Anthropocene' as the theme to accompany their studies. The detail content will be given on the VLE and act as a starting point for the student to evolve their ideas and critical thinking.
- k. The Programme Leader would prefer to keep it as it is, as it reiterates the choice of content and process. OCA think this is important as students can take 12 months to get through a unit and will need to refresh/review the theme list.
- l. adapted the LOs for show the 'scaffolding' of learning
- m. updated
- n. updated
- o. Unit 3.2 is called 'External Projects', we believe reading lists are watertight, as they have been scrutinised by Helen Barrett and all the books

have relevance. We would rather have a tight essential reading list where all books have relevance than a number of books in essential and recommended. This does raise questions concerning the difference between essential and recommended in the context of a unit i.e. why have recommended reading list in a unit at all? Especially within a self-directed framework that is Level 3.

p. Updated

### **3. Subject Benchmark Mapping:**

a. Ensure all the benchmark statements listed in this document are listed in the programme specification.

a. Done

## **BA (Hons) Creative Writing**

### **1. Programme Specification:**

a. Course Title: Remove BA (Hons) from this row.

b. Course overview: This section refers to the course being 'fully accredited'. Please confirm if the intention is for the course to be accredited by another professional statutory or regulatory body? Full details should be provided if so.

c. Course overview: This section should provide an insightful and distinctive overview of the course with reference to what students can expect from each Stage. Could some further information be added (particularly for stage one) to give students more detail of what to expect?

d. Course overview: Suggest removal of final two sentences from this section.

e. Aim: Remove 'main' from first sentence. All course aims should be listed in this section.

- f. Course outcomes: For ease of reference when looking at subject benchmark mapping please use continuous numbering in this section.
- g. Section F: Please remove template text.

#### OCA Response

- a. Updated
- b. Reference to accreditation moved
- c. Rewritten to include this info
- d. Removed
- e. Updated
- f. Deleted

#### 2. Course Diagram:

- 1. When compared to all other course diagrams this contains some extra description of each of the unit. Suggest remove so that the format is consistent for all courses.

#### OCA Response:

- a. Updated

#### 3. Unit Descriptors:

- a. All units: Content: Suggest 'indicative' syllabus/content is used to allow more flexibility and reduce the need for course changes throughout the period of validation.
- b. All units: Content: This section should provide students with the 'new knowledge that a student may acquire' it should also 'include the key syllabus of the unit'. This section should not be about outcomes, assessment or delivery. Please review these sections in light of the above. Some of the information included about assessment and delivery could be included in the Learning, Teaching and Assessment section of the programme specification.
- c. All units: Word counts: Please review given word counts and the equivalent number of minutes for a presentation to ensure these are in line with those stated for other OCA UG courses.

- d. All stage one and two units: Table A1 – Assessment Components: In 1) please clarify how many assignments students are expected to complete. The word count column indicates 1 – 5 and typical indicative assessment tasks three (there are also some discrepancies with the content sections). Is the word count for each assignment?
- e. Unit 1.2 Further writing skills: Content: Do students select two forms from a choice of novel writing, poetry and screenwriting? This could be made clearer at the beginning of this section.
- f. Unit 1.2 Further writing skills and Unit 1.3 Developing Your Writing Skills: Aims and learning outcomes: Both sections refer to all three of the creative forms but students only appear to select two of these? This means that they are unable to fully meet the aims or learning outcomes for the unit. Please amend.
- g. Unit 3.1 Practice and Research: Content: Amend reference to HE6 in third paragraph to stage three.
- h. Unit 3.2 and 3.3: Students take these units in a different order to that for all the other BA courses and the assessment requirements differ. What is the rationale for this?

#### OCA Response

- a. Added to each UD
- b. Updated and info removed
- c. Reviewed and updated
- d. Updated to 3 throughout stages 1 and 2, and clarified in content where relevant.
- e. Updated to be explicit about choices
- f. Updated to be explicit about choices
- g. updated
- h. For creative writers it is important to show the impact of their close reading and research into other writers on their own creative practice, so the first unit at stage 3 requires students to focus on a research project. This will enable learners to better demonstrate this impact in their second unit, which is their major creative writing project, rather than carrying out this project first and students finding they are having to revise it following later research. In the writing industry it is not usual to submit incomplete work, or work at the proposal stage, and therefore it is not until the final unit that students are asked to explore potential publication outlets. Publishing in any form is a

crowded and competitive industry in which writers can face a lot of rejection, so throughout the degree course students are warned against submitting work too early or before it is at its potential best. Leaving this Pathways to Publication unit to the final section of the degree course gives students the best chance of eventual success.

#### **4. Subject Benchmark Mapping:**

- a. Ensure this document includes mapping to each of the course learning outcomes, currently some listed under application have not been included.

Updated

#### **BA (Hons) Painting**

##### **1. Programme Specification:**

- a. Final Award Title and Type: Remove 'Painting' from this row.
- b. Course Title: Remove 'BA (Hons)' from this row.
- c. Subject/Qualification Benchmark Statement: Change 2008 to 2017 to match mapping document.
- d. Course overview: Small typos in second paragraph. Amend reference to 'courses' to 'units'.
- e. Course outcomes: For ease of reference when looking at subject benchmark mapping please use continuous numbering in this section.

OCA Response:

- a. updated
- b. updated
- c. updated
- d. updated

e. updated

## 2. Unit Descriptors:

- a. All units: Content: Suggest 'indicative' syllabus/content is used to allow more flexibility and reduce the need for course changes throughout the period of validation.
- b. All stage one units: Is there any recommended reading for the units? Currently only essential reading is included.
- c. Unit 1.1 Drawing for Painting: Content: Please review first two paragraphs as there is some repeated information.
- d. Unit 1.1 Drawing for Painting: Content: Should reference to 'course' in first paragraph be 'unit'?
- e. All stage two units: Content: If themes are likely to change or are able to be added to would suggest the number of themes is not listed and these are stated as 'examples of' rather than 'the current thematic clusters'.
- f. All stage 2 units: Aims and Learning outcomes: Aims should be distinctive from other units so that there is no repetition in a year especially. Each unit should have very clear aims that establish its role in the student learning experience. Please revise aims so that they are distinctive.

*(Repeated learning outcomes are considered to be academically appropriate in multiple units within a stage/level (as Art & Design education is iterative).)*

- g. Unit 2.1 Ideas Lab: Content: Amend references to 'course' to 'unit'.

## OCA RESPONSE

- a. Updated
- b. There is only essential reading as the Programme Leader for Painting wants students to gain the skills in reading and responding academic tests before adding 'recommended reading'. 'Essential Reading' will be drawn upon and well supported within the curriculum. The reading lists are watertight, as they have been scrutinised by Helen Barrett and all the books have relevance. We would rather have a tight essential reading list where all books have relevance than a number of books in essential and recommended. Updated – paragraph 2 has been deleted
- c. Yes. Updated

d. Numbers removed and 'Examples of thematic clusters could include' added

e. Updated

f. updated

### **3. Subject Benchmark Mapping:**

a. Amend to match numbering of course level outcomes in programme specification.

b. Updated

### **BA (Hons) Photography**

#### **1. Programme Specification:**

a. Final Award Title and Type: Remove 'Photography' from this row.

b. Course Title: Remove 'BA (Hons)' from this row.

c. Course overview: Review section

i. suggest that information listing each unit by title is reviewed to give a more general overview of what students can expect from each stage.

ii. suggest that some of the specific information about particular genres is removed so that if these change you do not also have to make material changes to the programme specification.

iii. remove reference to the course being 'modular'.

iv. remove reference to percentage of total OCA students as this may not continue to be accurate over the period of validation.

v. references to dissertation will need to be amended (see information for all courses above).

d. Section F: Please remove template text.

## OCA Response

- a. Updated
- b. Updated
- c. Updated
- d. updated

## 2. Unit Descriptors:

- a. All units: Content: Suggest 'indicative' syllabus/content is used to allow more flexibility and reduce the need for course changes throughout the period of validation.
- b. All units: Content: This section should provide students with the 'new knowledge that a student may acquire' it should also 'include the key syllabus of the unit'. This section should not be about outcomes, assessment or delivery. Please review these sections in light of the above. Some of the information included about specific assignments would be better included in course handbooks.
- c. All units: Table A1: Please complete indicative assessment tasks and word count columns.
- d. Unit 1.1 Approaching Photography: As there are two pathways for this unit please confirm if scheduled/independent hours and assessment requirements are the same for each pathway.
- e. Unit 1.1. Approaching Photography: The information about listing out each assignment is not needed here. See b. above.
- f. Unit 2.1 Challenging Genres: Content: Amend 'Exploring Genre' to 'Challenging Genres' to match unit title.
- g. Unit 2.1 Challenging Genres: Content: Amend reference to course in third paragraph to unit.
- h. Unit 2.3 Digital Image and Visual Culture: Content: Revise this section so that the unit is presented as one rather than two units put together. Remove reference to the unit being a combination of other units previously offered as this is not relevant here

OCA response



- a. Updated – 'indicative' added
- b. Updated
- c. Completed
- d. I can confirm they are the same
- e. Removed
- f. Updated
- g. Updated
- h. Updated

### **BA (Hons) Textiles**

#### **1. Programme Specification:**

- a. Final Award Title and Type: Remove 'Textiles' from this row.
- b. Course Title: Remove 'BA (Hons)' from this row.
- c. Subject/Qualification Benchmark Statement: Amend year to 2017 to match Subject Benchmark Mapping document.
- d. Course structure: Units for 2020/21 – There is one unit that is noted as elective. Is this correct? If so, which other unit is elective?
- e. Section F: Please remove template text.

#### **OCA Response**

- a. Updated
- b. Updated
- c. Updated
- d. Typo – updated to read 'core'
- e. Removed

## **2. Unit Descriptors:**

- a. All units: Assessment requirements: Please clarify what an 'articulation of academic thinking' is. Will students understand this terminology?
- b. Unit 1.3 Textile Ideas and Contexts: Content: This section states that students will produce a critical review but this is not listed as one of the assessment tasks in Table A1. Is this a part of one of the tasks listed?
- c. All stage 2 units: Each of the content sections refers to 'current' movements/moods/interest. As these unit remain validated for a period of five years these sections could be revised to remove 'current' as it is likely that these may change over the validation period (and would remove the need for changes to be made during this period).
- d. Unit 2.1 Contemporary Textile Crafts: Content: This section states that the 'unit supports students looking to be designer-makes, art practitioners and to develop a creative practice'. Does this cover all students or are there some who may not see themselves in any of these categories? If there are suggest that this is revised as this is a compulsory unit for all students.

### **OCA Response**

- a. Updated to 'critical review' also updated 40 to 'reflective presentation'
- b. Now reflected in the 'assessment requirements' section
- c. Updated to 'ongoing' or 'present' and even removed where cogently possible
- d. Updated – text removed.

## **BA (Hons) Visual Communications**

### **1. Contextual Review document**

- a. All staff listed are listed under Graphic Design and/or Illustration. Will all these staff members teach on the Visual Communication course?

### **OCA response**

- a. Yes – feeding into either GD or illustration biased units as specified in the 'units' column.

### **Programme Specification:**

- a. Final Award Title and Type: Remove 'Visual Communications' from this row.
- b. Course Title: Remove 'BA (Hons)' from this row.
- c. Course overview: Stage 2 section refers to 'this unit' without naming them. Suggest this section is revised to provide a more general overview for the stage.

#### **OCA response:**

- a. Updated
- b. Updated
- c. Updated

### **2. Course Diagram:**

1. Please amend course title and all references to Visual Communication to Visual Communicationss to match the rest of the course documentation.

#### **OCA response**

- a. Updated

### **3. Unit Descriptors:**

- a. All units: Content: This section should provide students with the 'new knowledge that a student may acquire' it should also 'include the key syllabus of the unit'. This section should not be about outcomes, assessment or delivery. Please review these sections in light of the above. Some of the information included about assessment and delivery could be included in the Learning, Teaching and Assessment section of the programme specification.

- b. All stage one and two units: Aims and Learning outcomes: Aims should be distinctive from other units so that there is no repetition in a year especially. Each unit should have very clear aims that establish its role in the student learning experience. Please revise aims so that they are distinctive.

*(Repeated learning outcomes are considered to be academically appropriate in multiple units within a stage/level (as Art & Design education is iterative).)*

- c. All stage one units: Content: A generic paragraph is included in each of the unit descriptors. Could this information be included elsewhere in the course documentation (for example the Learning, Teaching and

Assessment section of the programme specification) to avoid the need to repeat each time.

d. All stage one units: Aims: Each of the aims makes reference to Graphic Design and Illustration briefs, as well as Visual Communications. Should these just refer to Visual Communications for this course? It seems from the content section that students have the option for specialist study so may not necessarily cover everything? If this is this case these should be revised.

e. All stage one units: Learning outcomes: LO1 states that students will be able to 'respond to briefs as a graphic designer, illustrator communicator. Will students respond in each of these ways? Or as above if they can specialise will they not necessarily cover everything. If so, this should be revised.

#### OCA response

- a. Removed last paragraph from content (see 'c' below)
- b. Updated
- c. Repetitive text removed
- d. Updated
- e. Updated

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[1] Calculated from the start of the period of validation

[2] Dependent on whether the documents have been approved more than 9 weeks prior to the start of the course

[3] Mandatory response deadline is three weeks from date of the event

[4] Record any other substantive issues discussed by the panel by adding sub-headings in italics