

0800 731 2116

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Open College of the Arts

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July 2009

OCA Bursary Scheme

Studying with OCA is very good value for money, particularly for students who are considering studying for a degree. Attendance at a university for three years would normally cost over £9,000 just in fees, not to mention accommodation and cost of living. Studying to degree level with the OCA will cost from £4,000 and can be done from home. However we do recognise that for some people the cost of studying can be a barrier and for that reason we have set up a bursary scheme to help with our fees.

This note describes the aims of the OCA bursary scheme, how it works and how to apply.

Aims

- The OCA has set up a bursary fund to do two things:
- to widen participation in learning By this we mean making it possible for people to do a OCA course who otherwise would not be able to afford the full fees,
- to support progression in learning By this we mean we mean making it possible for people who have already successfully completed at least one OCA course but face difficulties paying to continue their studies.

How The Bursary Scheme Works

What is a bursary?

A bursary is financial support towards the cost of your course. We are not able to provide financial support for course materials or other costs associated with following a course.

Where does the money come from?

The OCA is an educational charity which receives no direct Government funding. A Bursary Fund has been established by the Trustees of the charity.

Who can apply and will I be successful?

Anyone can apply. The likelihood of success depends on your personal circumstances and our assessment of how likely you are to benefit from the course. If you have a low household income, are unemployed or have special needs and have a serious commitment to learning, you may be eligible.

How do I apply?

Applications can be made at any time in the year. To apply you should complete the bursary form available from the OCA. This can be downloaded from our website or we can send you a copy if you ring Academic Services on 0800 731 2116 or (0044)1226 730495 for overseas applicants. You should include supporting documents, such as a proof of low income (including figures) and copies of some of your work (for visual arts this should be between five and ten images). We cannot consider your application if you do not include a sample of your work. You should not send original works of art or manuscripts as we cannot return them.

Bursary applications are only accepted by hard copy or disk, not via Email.

Is there any advice available?

Yes. We cannot tell you if you will be successful in your application, but can advise on what you should include in your letter. If you require any further information that cannot be found in the guidance notes please contact Academic Services on 0800 731 2116.

Can a parent or carer make an application on my behalf?

Yes

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Do I need references?

No. However if you have studied an arts course elsewhere and you have supporting information about your work there such as tutor feedback, you should include a copy with your application.

How will the OCA process my application?

Your letter will be reviewed by a member of the Academic Services team. If they believe you are missing significant information they will contact you immediately. If you have previously been a student with the OCA they may speak to your tutor. The letter will then be considered by the Bursaries Committee. The Committee is chaired by the Chief Executive and meets on the first and third Thursday of each month.

How soon will I know?

From us receiving your letter you should know within 15 working days.

Will there be any conditions attached to my bursary?

Yes:

- any discount awarded is valid for three months. You would then need to reapply.
- any award given is valid on a course-by-course basis. After each completed course you would need to re-apply for your next intended course.

We expect you to devote your efforts to the course but there are no conditions attached. The bursary is not a loan. You will not need to repay it if you cannot complete the course.

If I am successful will I be able to start my course straight away?

Yes.

Can I appeal if I am unsuccessful?

No. The decisions of the Bursaries Committee are final. In making your application you accept that the college will not enter into debate or correspondence about the decision.

Is there any other support available?

If you are unsuccessful in your application we will advise you on other sources of information on funding to support learning.