Sending assignments to your tutor
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For each course you are studying there are a series of exercises and assignments to complete. As you finish each part of your course it is necessary to send this work to your tutor either via mail or digitally or a combination of both.

Sometimes completing the first assignment is the hardest part of the course unit. You may be unsure about your work, worried that you are doing it wrong, or that it is not good enough. Such thoughts are completely natural. The guide below should help you discern what to send.

Remember the first assignment is diagnostic and is designed to give your tutor a feel for your work at an early stage. Your work on this assignment won’t count toward your final grade.

What do I need to send my tutor for each assignment?
The course materials for each course will state clearly what students need to send to their tutor for each assignment.

As a rule of thumb, your tutor needs to see:
- A selection of your work from the section of the course you have just completed.
- Your assignment piece and preparatory work. If studying photography send the final set of photographs that you have selected in response to the ‘brief’ set to you, preparatory work could include contact sheets, initial responses and thoughts to the brief, your research into other photographers and their work and so on.
- Include sketchbooks and notebooks if you have them - we ask you to let your tutor have just one sketchbook or notebook for each section of the course you complete each time you send an assignment.
- You should include the relevant section of your learning log (as a hard copy or by email) or your learning blog, if you keep one (including the url for the section relating to your assignment).
If submitting your work digitally you can send it via one of the following methods:

- Send an email from your OCA email account to your tutor’s OCA email account with a link to your blog.
- Create a folder on your Google Drive and share it directly with your tutor’s OCA account.
- Upload your work directly to the student site.
- Another format priorly agreed with your tutor.

See the guide to submitting your work digitally on the Student Site here:
www.oca-student.com/resource-type/online-guide-elements

Usually at least some of your work completed in the section of the course is not relevant so it is not necessary to send everything all of the time, careful selection at assignment intervals will help build your skills for when it comes to putting together your assessment portfolio later on.
Your very first assignment

Your assignment feedback is personal, completely student centred and relative to your own work. At Assignments 2 and 4 your tutor will try to give an indication as to what might happen at assessment, but they will almost certainly not be assessing you when the time comes.

The assignment feedback is for you to use selfishly, to ask questions both through your making and through your log and send them off to be answered.

The role of the tutor is not one of critic. He/She doesn’t want to see 2 single assignment pieces and judge how successful they are on their own terms as art works.

Your role is to try to decipher your process and aims for your own work so that the tutor can be informed enough about what you were trying to do and how you went about it to be able to offer pertinent and directly useful advice.

Your role as a student is to be committed to your own work, and to select elements from across your experiences of the weeks leading up to sending off your first assignment to send your tutor so that they can elicit the most useful information in order to give you the best possible feedback to take forwards.

For example; you might mention in your log that two studies worked really well and the third was a disaster but you are not sure why, although you suspect that it is something to do with the palette. If you would like input on that, you should send in all three studies – but not the ten other studies that were really just more of the same.

Another example might be sending in a small sketchbook along with a larger final piece. Your tutor might see your more succinct, smaller sketches which cut to the chase and note how the energy that appears to have tailed off in your larger work might have been retained with a bit more judgement and discernment when it came to learning the lessons of the sketchbook.
You have an outer weight limit, and please do make your tutor’s life easier by making the work easy to extricate and, crucially, repack, but apart from that send a functional, vital and questioning edit with an accessible and punchy log to make sure that each assignment report is as valuable, pertinent and jam packed with fuel for the next leg as is possible.

Emma Drye, OCA Tutor and Assessor
See the full blog post and comments on WeAreOCA here: http://weareoca.com/fine_art/your-very-first-assignment-what-to-send-to-your-tutor/

Linda Mayoux, sketchbook and final piece with detail
Reflection
Before you send your work to your tutor, take a look at the Assessment Criteria for your course. This will be located in the introductory section. Review and evaluate your work with these in mind, making some notes in your log, be honest, enquiring and reflective. For example if something didn’t work - ask why not, if something was successful - how?

How should I package my work?
Work for assignments does not need mounting. We encourage you to send your work in an A1 portfolio. If your work needs a larger portfolio, we will accept an A0 portfolio. If you don’t have a portfolio, it’s important that you find a way of packaging your work so that it is flat, protected with card backing. Do not roll or fold drawings or paintings. Remember to fix your work if using charcoal, chalk pastel etc. Agree with your tutor before hand where to send the work and when best to send it so that it can be received or collected. Label everything clearly so that your tutor can establish what is your work at all times.

Are there any weight limits for assignment work sent to tutors?
Yes. We ask you to keep your work to a weight limit of 5 kilograms or less, including the weight of the portfolio (if there is one) and other work accompanying the assignment such as sketchbooks and notebooks. The weight limit is important as we invoice students for the additional postage costs incurred in sending their work back to them for packages over 5 kilograms in weight.
How to use your tutor reports

You’ve received your tutor report, what do you do with it? It was noted that frequently students did not use the advice given by their tutor in the feedback documentation. Tutors during assessment have seen instances where students if they had amended their work in line with the tutor feedback could have achieved a higher mark.

OCA students are in a unique position in that they regularly receive extensive written feedback during each unit (course) studied. The Tutor Report explains to the student where they are doing well and the places where improvements could be made. Often included are suggestions and pointers in how to develop both strengths and weaker areas, giving the student the opportunity to make improvements to the assignment they have just completed.

OCA Tutor and Assessor Rebecca Fairley has put together a list of suggested ways OCA students can explore and pull apart their feedback forms to extract the information.

- Firstly print out the tutor report document or enable the document to be annotated on your PC.
- Read it carefully.
- Read it again this time highlighting areas of importance. For example strengths, weaknesses and suggested changes.
- Read it again this time alongside the assessment criteria noting down any language that suggests you are at a particular level. (Tutors use the assessment criteria to judge the kind of feedback you require)
- Look at the Tutor Report with your notes along side the assignment it refers to.
- Lay out your work looking for the places your tutor has indicated for change.
- Make notes on what you see. Can you see what your tutor sees?
- Make further notes on how you could go about meeting the suggestions made or making improvements to the assignment.
- Talk the assignment and feedback over with another student (via Facebook or a student forum) or a friend/member of your family.
- Make your changes to the assignment.
- Reflect on how this process has helped you improve your assignment.
- Place both the Tutor Report and your notes in your learning log.
- Write up the changes you have made to the work and reflect upon the outcomes.
These are not hard and fast rules. The hope is that this list will offer guidance and a framework for you to effectively use your tutor reports.

If when you have gone through this process or something similar and you find there is something that still remains a mystery to you contact your tutor for clarification.

For further information on how to improve your work look out for OCA blog posts where tutors discuss specific students work on WeAreOCA here: http://weareoca.com/category/sw/

Rebecca Fairley, OCA Textile Course Leader, Tutor and Assessor

See the full blog post and comments on WeAreOCA here: http://weareoca.com/fine_art/how-to-use-your-tutor-reports/

Charlotte Brunskill, Illustration 1: Key Steps
Reworking your assignment
Following feedback from your tutor, you may wish to rework some of your assignment, especially if you are ultimately submitting your work for formal assessment. If you do this, be sure to reflect on what you have done and why in your learning log.

If you are unsure what to put in your learning log there is guide on the student site here: www.oca-student.com/study-guides/introducing-learning-logs

Still unsure?
Remember OCA’s course Support Advisers are also here to assist should you have any further queries or concerns. Email: coursesupport@oca.ac.uk
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