



## FAQs about the 2025-26 Academic Year

### What does auto re-enrollment look like this year?

Great news—if you plan to keep everything the same, there’s no need to change anything! However, once you have talked directly with your instructor and you decide you need to make a change (extend/shorten lesson time, switch instructors, or withdraw), please [submit a change request using this form](#) by May 31. We cannot guarantee an open spot once open enrollment begins on July 1st. In addition to this, students can now add/drop/change lessons on a monthly basis.

### How do I schedule my lesson day and time for next year?

Talk directly with your instructor about your fall schedule!

### I applied for financial aid, will I still be able to request changes?

Yes! Financial aid is open to current students and families from April 18 through May 18. If you did not receive the application email, [you can find the form here](#). Notification will be sent out in early June. Students will have time to decide if they would like to accept their award before the open enrollment period opens in July, so they can make requests between June and July.

### What do I receive with my tuition at OCoM?

When you choose music education at the Omaha Conservatory, you're investing in much more than weekly lessons. Your tuition supports a full membership experience that offers professional instruction, enriching opportunities, and a vibrant musical community that home-based studios simply can't match.

Here's what your tuition makes possible:

#### High-Quality Music Instruction

- Private lessons with Artist-Faculty—professional performers and educators with advanced degrees and deep experience.



- A personalized learning plan that fits your student's goals, learning style, and pace.
- Faculty time spent preparing, researching, and customizing instruction to meet your student's unique needs.

### **Performance & Growth Opportunities**

- Two recitals annually that include professional collaborative pianists and rehearsals.
- Monthly Performance Club events, and guest masterclasses to build skill and confidence on stage.
- Faculty support for competitions, auditions, and portfolio development for advanced opportunities.

### **Family Support & Communication**

- Clear, ongoing communication and resources to help parents support learning at home.
- Professional administrative staff who manage admissions, events, recital logistics, studio assignments, billing, and daily logistics so families can focus on learning.

### **Professional Facilities & Equipment**

- Access to state-of-the-art teaching studios, performance halls, practice rooms, a keyboard lab, and a computer lab.
- Tuition supports piano tunings, technology upgrades, and digital learning tools that enhance the student experience.

### **Community & Enrichment**

- Free or low-cost admission to concerts, guest artist events, and community gatherings that bring families together through music.
- A rich musical environment that fosters inspiration, creativity, and belonging.



While tuition does not fund scholarships and financial aid, they are a vital part of our commitment to access and celebrating excellence. As a nonprofit community music school, OCoM raises funds through its Development Department to offer two types of support:

- **Need-based financial aid**, to reduce barriers to high-quality music education, as funds allow.
- **Merit scholarships**, which are open to *all* OCoM students through a formal audition process—regardless of financial need.

By enrolling at OCoM, your family becomes part of a community that champions musical excellence, inclusivity, and opportunity for all.

### How will tuition be billed?

Your tuition will be charged automatically to your Opus1 account. **This year, there are no registration fees for returning students!** You can pay the full amount upfront or spread it out over 11 months for your annual tuition invoice. It's important to know that if you opt for the 11-month payment plan, you'll receive monthly invoices for your tuition throughout the year. Billing for the 2025-2026 school year begins August 1, 2025. Final invoices for the 2026 school year will be received on June 1, 2026. If you pay annually, a reminder will be sent out 2 full weeks before billing occurs to give time to change your payment preferences.

### In Opus, my August bill shows that I'm paying more per month for the upcoming academic year. Why is that?

The tuition adjustment is not a rate increase but a billing change. Your tuition for this year will remain the same. After listening to feedback from students and families, we adjusted billing from 12 months to 11 months to match our programming calendar. While it may appear as a rate increase, students will only be charged for 11 months.



## **What happens if I need to miss my lesson?**

Communication with your instructor is key. When students need to miss a scheduled lesson, they are encouraged to reach out to other students in the same studio to swap lesson times or request a virtual lesson. While virtual lessons can look different than a typical lesson, they're still rich in educational content. If no student can swap or a student cannot make a virtual lesson possible, they are marked absent when they miss the lesson. While there is no additional time to make up the lesson, your teacher will connect with you to see how they can support continuing your child's learning, which may include updating practice goals, sending a listening example, and more.

## **What if I need to miss several lessons or need to change my lesson time?**

We understand that school productions, sports, and academic schedules can create temporary or permanent conflicts with your lesson time. Here's how to handle each situation:

### **If you need to miss several lessons in a row due to a theater production or other temporary commitments (Temporary Conflict):**

If you anticipate missing multiple weeks due to a short-term commitment—like a theater production, school event, or family travel—and need a temporary new time for your lessons, talk with your teacher first to discuss possible scheduling adjustments. Once you communicate with your teacher and they can accommodate a temporary change:

1. Email the Admissions Team at [admissions@omahacm.org] and CC your teacher.
2. Admissions will confirm the change with your Artist-Faculty member and update your schedule in Opus1.

### **If you need to make a permanent change to your lesson time or length (permanent change):**

Permanent adjustments are absolutely possible at the start of a new school year or when your schedule shifts long-term.

1. Talk to your teacher first to explore available options and agree on a new plan.



2. Once confirmed, email the Admissions Team and CC your teacher to submit the request.
3. Admissions will process the update and confirm the new schedule in Opus1.

Keeping your teacher in the loop from the beginning ensures a smoother scheduling process—and helps us continue supporting your musical progress without interruption. Including Admissions ensures that your Opus calendar and billing remain accurate.

## What happens if my teacher needs to miss a lesson?

If your teacher needs to miss a lesson, there are **two possible options**, depending on their professional discretion, availability, and personal circumstances:

### 1. Rescheduling the lesson

Teachers are allowed to reschedule a limited number of lessons each year. If a reschedule is possible, your teacher will contact you to find a new time. A lesson credit will appear in your Opus1 account, and once the new time is confirmed, the credit will be converted into a scheduled lesson on your calendar. Rescheduled lessons occur within our academic calendar, which runs from early August through late June and is reflected in your Opus1 schedule.

### 2. Using Paid Time Off (PTO)

If rescheduling isn't possible, your teacher may use Paid Time Off (PTO) — an important and intentional part of OCoM's academic model. PTO allows our Artist-Faculty to tend to personal, family, or professional needs while maintaining the energy and excellence they bring to their teaching. PTO is already built into our tuition and calendar planning.

When a teacher's absence is due to a professional engagement, they will also offer personalized guidance or resources to support your student's continued progress outside the lesson.

In addition, students receive a Seminar credit, valid for 18 months, which can be redeemed for a Seminar, an enriching, faculty-led group learning experience that complements their private study and connects them to the broader OCoM community. In most cases, families should expect no more than two PTO-related Seminar credits per academic year.



## What is a Seminar, and how does it support my student's learning?

Seminars are group-based learning experiences to enrich and complement private lesson instruction. Led by OCoM faculty, Seminars may take the form of masterclasses, group coaching sessions, performance workshops, or special-topic classes. These sessions are intentionally structured to foster musical growth in new ways beyond the scope of one-on-one lessons.

Here's why Seminars are valuable to a strong musical education:

- **Performance practice in a supportive setting**  
Students gain experience performing in front of peers and receiving constructive feedback, helping to build stage presence and confidence.
- **Collaborative learning and peer inspiration**  
Watching and engaging with other students fosters a deeper understanding of musical interpretation, technique, and creativity.
- **Exposure to new ideas and perspectives**  
Seminars often introduce fresh repertoire, theory concepts, or artistic insights that expand a student's musical toolkit.
- **Community and connection**  
Being part of a Seminar helps students connect to the larger OCoM community and supports their identity as developing musicians.

Each student receives Seminar credits when a faculty member must miss a lesson and cannot reschedule. These **credits are valid for 18 months** and can be redeemed for various offerings throughout the year.

While Seminars do not replace the personalization of a private lesson, they are a meaningful and enriching part of the OCoM experience, aligned with our mission to nurture well-rounded, confident musicians.



## **Will I get to choose which Seminar to attend when my teacher takes PTO?**

Yes! When your teacher uses Paid Time Off (PTO), a Seminar credit is added to your Opus1 account — giving you the flexibility to choose the Seminar that best fits your interests and schedule.

Our full-time resident Artist Faculty plan and lead Seminars, which are offered frequently throughout the year and designed to be engaging, cross-instrumental, and enriching. They provide valuable performance practice, exposure to new ideas, and a chance to connect with peers.

To explore upcoming options, visit our Seminars page on the OCoM website or check our monthly email overview. When you're ready, simply click "Use" on your Seminar credit in Opus1 and choose the session you'd like to attend — it's quick and easy!

## **What happens when there are weather closures and building emergencies?**

When closures occur due to weather or other unforeseen circumstances, lessons are not rescheduled and students will receive a Seminar credit. However, to ensure that students progress, faculty develop a plan or process to provide educational support. Support strategies may include:

- Inviting students to send a practice video for feedback
- Emailing updated goals if prior goals were completed
- Providing a progress summary or written next steps
- Sharing a brief instructional video or resource

These flexible, personalized responses help students stay on track with their musical development and ensure that each child continues to receive meaningful, individualized instruction — even when an in-person lesson isn't possible.



## **Why don't we get a reschedule when lessons are canceled due to weather?**

We understand this can be disappointing, but this policy helps keep tuition stable and honors our Artist Faculty's contracted calendar and professional obligations. Adding contracted make-up weeks would increase costs across the student body and reduce faculty availability for performances and artistic development, ultimately enhancing what they bring to their teaching.

Thank you for understanding as we work to balance quality, sustainability, and student growth across a large community organization.

## **Why aren't lessons online when there's a weather closure?**

It's a great question, especially since OCoM *did* offer virtual lessons during COVID. While that worked during a very unique time, our current approach reflects the reality of how we operate today—and why quality and equity remain our top priorities.

After the first few weeks during COVID, our faculty could access the OCoM building even when it was closed to the public. That allowed them to teach virtually from their professional studios, using high-quality pianos, sound-treated rooms, and reliable internet connections. The result was virtual teaching that maintained the high standards we expect for our students.

However, the building is fully closed during weather closures, and most faculty cannot replicate that same teaching environment from home. Many do not have the necessary instruments, equipment, or space to teach effectively and professionally outside their studios and may be serving as primary caregivers that day themselves. In addition, during weather issues, sometimes internet connections become unreliable.

More importantly, not all students can access a suitable instrument, internet connection, or quiet learning space at home. Offering virtual lessons during weather closures would create inconsistent and potentially inequitable learning experiences across families.





### What happens instead?

- Students receive a personalized practice challenge or instructional focus for the week, designed by their teacher to keep them progressing independently. This will vary by student and studio.
- Families receive a Seminar Credit, which can be used for Seminars, which are:
  - Led by our Artist-Faculty
  - A variety of workshops are intended to enhance practice and performance
  - Creative musical exploratory labs

This approach allows us to continue supporting students with meaningful musical growth—while maintaining our standards of quality and fairness for everyone in the OCoM community.

### How can students and families provide feedback or share concerns about these policies?

We welcome your input. Students and families are encouraged to email us at **[admissions@omahacm.org](mailto:admissions@omahacm.org)** with any questions, concerns, or feedback. We value your voice and are committed to listening and responding thoughtfully.

While we can't implement every suggestion immediately, all feedback is carefully reviewed and considered during our annual planning process. Some changes require significant planning time—sometimes a year or more—due to scheduling logistics, financial implications, and our community's diverse needs.

In some cases, we may determine that a proposed change, while thoughtful, is not practical or financially sustainable within our current structure. However, we genuinely appreciate every idea and the care behind it. Your perspective helps us continue improving the OCoM experience for all.