

Programme Specification

A Programme Specification provides a concise summary of the main features of a programme and its intended learning outcomes. It is intended to be used by prospective students, current students, academic staff and potential employers.

Programme Title:	
BA (Hons) Visual Effects BA (Hons) Visual Effects with Foundation Year	
Programme (AOS) Code(s):	BM1VSE1 / BM1VSE4
UCAS Code:	VEF1 / VEF4
Name of Final Award:	Bachelor of Arts with Honours, BA (Hons)
Level of Qualification:	Level 6
Regime of Delivery:	Attendance
Mode(s) of Delivery:	Full Time
Typical Length of Study (Years):	3 years / 4 years with Foundation Year
Professional Body Recognition / Accreditation (including specific requirements where applicable):	NA

Brief Description of the Programme

This course presents students with an opportunity to study Visual Effects based at both the University and at Pinewood Studios. This will allow them to understand the industry as it currently operates, develop professional networks and develop their work to the standards the industry requires.

In Level 4 students will study at Bucks. There will be 14 days spent at Pinewood Studios where students will learn of the opportunities available to them in the industry, meet current industry practitioners and learn about the pipeline used to produce AAA movies.

In Level 5 students will visit the Studios 1 day per week, where they will receive classes, industry talks, masterclasses and industry professionals will run reviews of their project work.

In Level 6 students will be based at Pinewood where they will complete project work under the mentorship of a variety of industry professionals and under supervision by university tutors who will oversee the overall progress and wellbeing of the students.

We believe that this combination of high quality university based teaching and significant exposure current industry professionals will provide students with the best possible opportunity to enter the film / TV / commercials industry as visual effects artists.

Programme Aims

1	Provide a flexible framework for under-graduate study which offers visual effects students the opportunity to develop their knowledge skills and understanding, achieving mastery of their chosen specialism.
2	Develop personal and professional insights which will enable students to confront, challenge and shape future practice in the digital creative industries.
3	Gain an interdisciplinary understanding of the digital creative industries area including the ability to respond creatively and professionally to a brief.

Programme Learning Outcomes

The Bucks Graduate Attributes focus on the development of innovative leaders in professional and creative capacities, who are equipped to operate in the 21st Century labour market and make a positive impact as global citizens. The attributes are developed through the programme.

ID	Learning Outcome
On successful completion of the programme a graduate will be able to:	
Graduate Attribute: Knowledge and its application (K)	
K1	Evaluate the appropriateness of different problem solving approaches in a structured manner as applied to the creative processes used.
K2	Use a range of established techniques beyond the context in which they were studied delivering a suitable outcome within a fixed time scale.
K3	Manage and make appropriate use of the interaction between intention, process and outcome to produce work conforming to the standards required by a client.
K4	Demonstrate a systematic understanding of key concepts of the creative process and its limitations.
K5	Engage critically with key thinkers, leading producers, debates and intellectual paradigms within the field of production.
Graduate Attribute: Creativity (C)	
C1	Generate ideas, proposals, and/or solutions independently and/or collaboratively as in response to set briefs
C2	Make sound judgements in the production process, critically evaluating data, arguments and assumptions.
C3	Select and evaluate production techniques consistent with contemporary industry pipelines to produce
C4	select, experiment with and make appropriate use of materials, processes, technologies and environments showing understanding of quality standards and attention to detail
C5	Make recommendations for improvement in their work and practices demonstrating an understanding of the limits of their own knowledge and the impact this has.
Graduate Attribute: Social and ethical awareness and responsibility (S)	
S1	Understand and implement the social norms of working within a studio based professional environment
S2	Be resourceful, ethical and entrepreneurial

S3	Work productively in a group or team, assimilating the ideas of others and communicating the results and analysis of work in a structured and coherent manner which is both accurate and reliable.
S4	Understand the implications of IP including the ethical responsibilities associated with working with confidential material.
S5	Anticipate and accommodate change as driven by varying sources such as economic, environmental and ethical.
Graduate Attribute: Leadership and self-development (L)	
L1	Assess and critically evaluate their own work with reference to well established academic and professional paradigms and in the context of contemporary professional practice.
L2	Demonstrate resilience through the ability to manage workload and stress.
L3	Employ a range of established research techniques for projects or creative productions, demonstrating the exercise of personal responsibility and decision making.
L4	Work productively in a group or team, showing abilities at different times to listen, reflect, contribute and lead effectively.
L5	Demonstrate the qualities and collaborative skills necessary for employment and progression to other qualifications requiring the exercise of personal responsibility and decision making.

Programme Structure

Programmes are structured in stages. The number of stages will vary depending on the mode (e.g. full-time, part-time), duration and location of study which will be detailed in the Programme Handbook.

Modules are set at a specific academic level and listed as either core (compulsory) or optional. The level indicates the relative academic difficulty which will increase through the programme. Passing modules will reward you with academic credit. The amount of credits will depend on the complexity of the module and the level of effort required, which is measured in 'notional learning hours'.

Our [Academic Advice webpages](#) provide more information on the structure of taught awards offered by the University.

Foundation Level (Optional for students on degree programmes)

Code	Module Title	Credit	Core / Option	Compensable (Normally Yes)
FY026	Preparing for Success Knowledge and Creativity	N/A	C	Yes
FY027	Preparing for Success Self-development and Responsibility	N/A	C	Yes
FY028	Inquiry and Research Skills	N/A	C	Yes
FY015	Introduction to Moving Image Production	N/A	C	Yes

Level Four

Code	Module Title	Credit	Core / Option	Compensable (Normally Yes)
FX409	3D Modelling & Pipeline	30	C	Yes

FX410	Texturing & Look Development	15	C	Yes
FX411	Lighting & Rendering	15	C	Yes
FX412	Animation Principles & The Moving Figure	30	C	Yes
FX413	Previz & Layout	15	C	Yes
FX414	Rigging	15	C	Yes

Level 5

Code	Module Title	Credit	Core / Option	Compensable (Normally Yes)
FX523	Compositing 1	15	C	Yes
FX524	Compositing 2	15	C	Yes
FX525	Modelling & Look Development	30	C	Yes
FX526	Digital Sculpting and Organic Modelling	15	C	Yes
FX527	Groom	15	C	Yes
FX519	Muscle Rigging	15	C	Yes
FX528	Character Clothing & Simulation	15	C	Yes

Level Six

Code	Module Title	Credit	Core / Option	Compensable (Normally Yes)
FX605	Industry Production Project	30	C	Yes
FX606	Portfolio Piece	30	C	No
FX607	Creative Production Project	30	C	Yes
FX608	Showreel	30	C	Yes

Learning and Teaching Activities

Please see the [Academic Advice pages](#) for a description of learning and teaching activities that are recognised by the University. Detailed information on this specific programme is outlined below:

The teaching and learning is broken into 10 week periods which allow students learn their subject in a formative assessment regime. These are followed by 5 week periods of summative assessment taking the form of projects which bring their new found skills together in a meaningful way and allow them to tackle tasks commonly found in the industry.

Projects are individual to enable assessment of learning outcomes. A group project is likely to lead to students only being assessed on some of the learning outcomes.

- Classes will take place in appropriate computer labs
- Workshop Demonstrations for new techniques
- Group work
- 1:1 feedback and support during class time
- Video Feedback
- File reviews

- Course Video Tutorials
- Peer review
- Students will be expected to read magazines, books, watch films, TV, the internet, read / watch making of books and films in order to keep up with the industry as it evolves. There are various websites and blogs that should be tracked.
- Online video tutorials will be used for independent study, especially for mastering new techniques.
- Reading books around the subject is also important, particularly for gaining a historical perspective on the subject which is not directly part of the course can nevertheless significantly influence the depth of a student's development.
- Placements will be very useful, if they can be obtained. The course is designed to give students access to industry methods and contacts regardless of whether placements can be found.
- Students will need to devote substantial independent study time to practice, extending their knowledge beyond the material taught and refining their skills.
- Students will be given additional workshops from the LDU on academic references, analytical writing and evaluation each year.

Other aspects:

- Students will be encouraged to attend areas of interest on the L5 VFX course to support interest and a broader understanding of the VFX pipeline, where timetabling permits.
- Where appropriate resources at Pinewood will mirror those at the university, factors that will affect this will include cost, physical space and demand.
- Due to the specialised nature of the software involved the computer labs will be dedicated to the Animation and Visual Effects courses and not available to courses that are able to obtain the software they need in general purpose computer rooms.

Additional Course Costs

There are costs associated with all studies, additional to the tuition fee, which require consideration, when planning and budgeting for expenditure. Costs are indicative and for the total length of the course shown unless otherwise stated and will increase with inflation; depending on the programme they may include equipment, printing, project materials, study trips, placement activities, DBS and/or other security checks.

Students will be able to work in the University on our computers.

Ideally they will also have the following:

- An up-to-date laptop or personal computer with a good processor, a good amount of RAM, a good graphics card and a large hard drive. Approx £1000 - £1500 depending on budget and spec.
- A drawing tablet and pen. From £50
- A large capacity external hard drive. From £50
- Students may also wish to invest in personal cloud storage. Prices vary, 1TB from £4 per month
- Pen drives for file transfer. 32GB from £5.

A free bus to Pinewood studios is not guaranteed at the time of writing, in which case students will need to factor in the cost of travel to the studios.

Contact Hours

1 unit of credit is the equivalent of 10 notional learning hours. Full time undergraduate students study 120 credits (1200 hours) and full-time postgraduate students study 180 credits (1800 hours) per year or 'stage' of the course.

Course Stage	Scheduled Activities (Hours)	Guided Independent Study (Hours)	Placement / Study Abroad / Work Based Learning (Hours)
Year One	360	840	
Year Two	360	840	
Year Three	360	840	

Students studying this programme with a Foundation Year will complete an additional 1200 hours during that year.

Assessment Methods

The [Assessment and Examination webpages](#) provide further information on how assignments are marked and moderated, including a description of assessment activities. These also include further information about how feedback on assessed work is provided to students, including our commitment to ensure this is provided to students within 15 working days (the 'three-week turnaround').

The following assessment activities are used on this programme:

- Presentations
- Coursework
- Portfolio
- Reflective Learning Journals
- Group work
- Dailies

Dailies:

In the industry the life of many artists is comprised of going to a daily team review session which will be led by a supervisor and held in a screening room. The supervisor will review the work of each artist and give them notes to work on for the following day. This process is then repeated.

Daily reviews would be overkill in an education environment so instead there will be regular reviews which will mimic this process and prepare students for industry life. The aim is to familiarise students with presenting work in progress to a group of people and to develop their resilience in taking feedback and responding appropriately.

Learning Journals:

Students will be expected to submit learning journals with most modules (see descriptors). These are expected to be illustrative, annotated and analytical rather than descriptive in nature. People inevitably work in different ways and in CGI there is always more than one route to an effective outcome. It is expected that students will find workflows that suit them as individuals.

The learning journal gives the student an opportunity to show how they work and why. It also provides supporting evidence of the originality of the work submitted and will also help inform and justify aspects of assessment including:

- Capacity to evaluate and judge quality of own work

- Capacity to compare own work to professional standards
- Capacity to identify how to improve own practice
- Capacity to identify problems and solve them.
- Capacity evolve own work over a period of time

Each assignment brief will need to make it clear what the expectations of a journal are and how these expectations link to grading. There is no strict word count for this activity, however a reasonable expectation would be in the region of 1000 – 2000 words with 15 - 20 distinct annotated images per 30 credits of learning. As an essay this might amount to 12.5 hours of work, however the nature of journal is different and likely to take half of that time or less. The hours for the learning journal are incorporated into the project time as the thinking process for both is the same.

Students will be expected to adopt appropriate formal academic conventions in the writing of their journals, including use of language and referencing.

Students will produce 1 learning journal per project rather than 1 learning journal per module. They will be expected to use headings to clearly mark out the purpose of the content.

Any formative discussions of project progress should include the journal where possible

As part of the reflective process students can voice record and annotate over submitted sequences which can then be submitted in addition to the journal, but should not duplicate content.

Classification

Calculation of final award:	Level 5 - 33% / Level 6 – 67%
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For full details of assessment regulations for all taught programmes please refer to our [Results webpages](#). These include the criteria for degree classification.

Admissions Requirements

Please see the [Application webpages](#) for more information on how to apply, including a statement on how we support students from a variety of backgrounds. Please also see our [general entry requirements](#) for taught programmes. Applicants who do not meet our published entry requirements are encouraged to contact our admissions team for further advice and guidance.

Typical applicant profile and any programme-specific entry requirements

Students will need to meet our standard entry criteria and provide a portfolio demonstrating their commitment to the creative arts. The portfolio is expected to vary in format, from drawing portfolios to their own video content. A lecturer will assess the suitability of the portfolio for the course. In certain circumstances a student with an exceptional portfolio should be admitted even if they do not meet the standard entry criteria.

Do applicants required a Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) Check?	No
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Opportunities for students on successful completion of the programme

Specialisms include:
Character Modelling
Environment Modelling
Props Modelling
Animator
Rigger
FX Artist / TD
Lighting Artist
Texturing Artist

Recognition of Prior Learning

Previous study, professional and / or vocational experiences may be recognised as the equivalent learning experience and permit exemption from studying certain modules. Please refer to our [Credit Accumulation webpages](#) for further guidance.

Student Support

During the course of their studies, students will be supported in the following ways:

- At the start of their studies all students will receive a full **induction** to the programme which will include introduction to the staff responsible for delivering the course, and access to library and IT facilities
- The **Programme Handbook** will outline the exact nature of the course and how it is structured, including the availability of option modules
- Each student will be allocated a **Personal Tutor** who will support their academic development, be able to advise and guide them with their studies and, where necessary, give advice on study options
- Students will be able to access our full range of **support services**, including the Learning Development Unit for skills and study support, the Library, the Careers and Employability Team, Student Finance Team, Accommodation and Counselling Services.

Appendices

Quality Assurance

Awarding Body:	Bucks New University
Language of Study:	English
QAA Subject Benchmark Statement(s):	Art and Design (2016)
Assessment Regulations:	<i>Academic Assessment Regulations</i> , accessible via the Academic Advice webpages (https://bucks.ac.uk/students/academicadvice)
Does the Fitness to Practise procedure apply to this programme?	No
Date Published / Updated:	September 2019
Date programme re-approval required:	2024-25

Other awards available on programme (Exit Qualifications)

Please refer to the *Academic Qualifications Framework* for Exit Qualifications recognised by the University and credit and module requirements.

Name of Exit Qualification:	Ordinary Degree
Full name of Qualification and Award Title:	BA Visual Effects
Credits requirements:	300 Credits
Module requirements:	ALL 120 Credits at Level 4 ALL 120 Credits at Level 5 PLUS 60 credits at Level 6 (excluding FX606)
Learning Outcome	
K4: Demonstrate a systematic understanding of key concepts of the creative process and its limitations.	
C2: Make sound judgements in the production process, critically evaluating data, arguments and assumptions.	
C5: Make recommendations for improvement in their work and practices demonstrating an understanding of the limits of their own knowledge and the impact this has.	
S1: Understand and implement the social norms of working within a studio based professional environment including responding appropriately to feedback and direction.	
S3: Work productively in a group or team, assimilating the ideas of others and communicating the results and analysis of work in a structured and coherent manner which is both accurate and reliable.	
L1: Assess and critically evaluate their own work with reference to well established academic and professional paradigms and in the context of contemporary professional practice.	

L4: Work productively in a group or team, showing abilities at different times to listen, reflect, contribute and lead effectively.

Name of Exit Qualification:	Diploma of Higher Education (DipHE)
Full name of Qualification and Award Title:	DipHE Visual Effects
Credits requirements:	240 Credits
Module requirements:	ALL 120 Credits at Level 4 ALL 120 Credits at Level 5
Learning Outcome	
C2: Make sound judgements in the production process, critically evaluating data, arguments and assumptions.	
C3: Select and evaluate vfx techniques consistent with contemporary industry pipelines.	
C5: Make recommendations for improvement in their work and practices demonstrating an understanding of the limits of their own knowledge and the impact this has.	
K2: Use a range of established techniques beyond the context in which they were studied delivering a suitable outcome within a fixed time scale.	
K5: Engage critically with key thinkers, leading producers, debates and intellectual paradigms within the field of animation.	
S3 Work productively in a group or team, assimilating the ideas of others and communicating the results and analysis of work in a structured and coherent manner which is both accurate and reliable.	
L1 Assess and critically evaluate their own work with reference to well established academic and professional paradigms and in the context of contemporary professional practice.	
L3: Employ a range of established research techniques for projects or creative productions, demonstrating the exercise of personal responsibility and decision making.	

Name of Exit Qualification:	Certificate of Higher Education (CertHE)
Full name of Qualification and Award Title:	CertHE Visual Effects
Credits requirements:	120 Credits
Module requirements:	ALL 120 Credits at Level 4
Learning Outcome	
K1: Evaluate the appropriateness of different problem solving approaches in a structured manner as applied to the creative processes used.	
K2: Use a range of established techniques beyond the context in which they were studied delivering a suitable outcome within a fixed time scale.	
K3: Manage and make appropriate use of the interaction between intention, process and outcome to produce work conforming to the standards required by a client.	

S3 Work productively in a group or team, assimilating the ideas of others and communicating the results and analysis of work in a structured and coherent manner which is both accurate and reliable.

C1: Generate ideas, proposals, and/or solutions independently and/or collaboratively as in response to set briefs

C4: select, experiment with and make appropriate use of materials, processes, technologies and environments showing understanding of quality standards and attention to detail

S1: Understand and implement the social norms of working within a studio based professional environment including responding appropriately to feedback and direction.

S4: Understand the implications of IP including the ethical responsibilities associated with working with confidential material

L1: Assess and critically evaluate their own work with reference to well established academic and professional paradigms and in the context of contemporary professional practice.

L3: Employ a range of established research techniques for projects or creative productions, demonstrating the exercise of personal responsibility and decision making.