Buckinghamshire New University

PROGRAMME SPECIFICATION

1. Key Information

Programme Title:	MA 3D Animation for Professionals
Awarding Institution:	Buckinghamshire New University
Teaching Institution(s):	Buckinghamshire New University
Subject Cluster:	Film, TV & Media Production
Award Title (including separate Pathway Award Titles where offered):	MA 3D Animation for Professionals
Pathways (if applicable)	
FHEQ level of final award:	7
Other award titles available (exit qualifications):	Postgraduate Certificate Postgraduate Diploma
Accreditation details:	
Length of programme:	18 months
Mode(s) of Study:	Part Time
Mode of Delivery:	Online
Language of study:	English
QAA Subject Benchmark(s):	UK QAA Characteristics Statement for Master's Degree
Other external reference points (e.g. Apprenticeship Standard):	
Course Code(s):	MAANIMDP
UCAS Code(s):	
Approval date:	01 December 2022
Date of last update:	

2. Programme Summary

This MA programme, the world's longest running online 3D Animation master's degree, in collaboration with the acclaimed programme Animation Apprentice, will equip you with the skills needed to succeed as an animator across the different animation and games industries. You will be taught and given feedback by professionals and lecturers who have years of experience in their field. During the course you will be taught some of the fundamental skills of 3D Animation and animation studies, considering recent social trends in the industry, technological development, professional contexts. Carefully designed workshops will develop your skills, and you will be given valuable practical insights into problem solving, as well as putting together a successful showreel.

Throughout the programme, you will obtain a practical understanding of the skills required to produce industry-level animation scenes and to create a unique portfolio of varied work. You will acquire the knowledge to evaluate critically the importance of cultivating unique, as well as personal entrepreneurial skills in order to stand out in the industry, as well as communicate effectively in a professional international environment, including other departments within the film and gaming industries.

The course is designed to be part-time, offering a flexible course of study which makes it suitable for those who are already working. Over the years, our students and graduates have won many festival awards for their work. Many have gone on to work for leading animation and vfx houses such as MPC, DNEG, Framestore and Escape Studios.

3. Programme Aims and Learning Outcomes

Programme Aims

This programme aims to:

1. Give a sophisticated knowledge and application of 3D animation techniques and methodologies and a critical awareness of the various methods used to create work for feature films, TV and the games industry.
2. Provide an understanding of the creative application of knowledge and skills, together with a practical knowledge of the animation and games industry.

3. Teach the ability to critically evaluate the resources for creating animated projects in order to deliver industry-standard clips and short films.
4. Develop learners' self-direction and originality in working professionally to create a portfolio and showreel that stands out.

5. Give an understanding of how to respond appropriately to sophisticated creative briefs, with the ability to balance creative aspirations with an achievable goal, in a fixed timescale.

Programme Learning Outcomes

Knowledge and Understanding (K)

On successful completion of the programme you will be able to:

ID	Learning Outcome
K1	Structure locomotion, weight and flexibility elements that can be applied in a professional animation context.
K2	Systematically critique industry-relevant contemporary issues and debates in 3D animation and critically analyse key aspects of relevant industry sectors.
K3	Demonstrate an understanding of the underlying concepts and principles associated with 3D animation as a visual, artistic medium.
K4	Synthesise conceptual and theoretical understandings of character formation to inform and critically evaluate the creative decision-making process.
K5	Appraise quantitative and qualitative research techniques, and the relative strengths and weaknesses of these different methodological approaches.

Analysis and Criticality (C)

On successful completion of the programme you will be able to:

ID	Learning Outcome
C1	Combine both primary/secondary sources and conceptual academic and non-academic frameworks pertaining to research in the field of animation and related media and cultural studies.
C2	Formulate well-developed lines of argument and sophisticated judgements made in accordance with fundamental theories and concepts.
C3	Prescribe ideas and techniques that are ideal in order to devise and sustain arguments and/or solve problems, all of which are consistent with the norms of the discipline.
C4	Draw on research models enabled or underpinned by emergent technologies in order to evaluate methodologies, develop critiques, and, where appropriate, propose new hypotheses.
C5	Contribute to the current professional thinking surrounding the chosen area of research.

Application and Practice (P)

On successful completion of the programme you will be able to:

ID	Learning Outcome
P1	Differentiate between varied discipline-specific methods and techniques to develop and apply knowledge and understanding and to initiate and carry out projects.
P2	Integrate a number of video editing techniques, combining animation with music and sound FX to an appropriate industry standard.
P3	Demonstrate a sophisticated knowledge and understanding of creature acting, anthropomorphism and performance.
P4	Generate focused and creative ideas, proposals and/or solutions, in response to specific set briefs.

Transferable skills and other attributes (T)

On successful completion of the programme you will be able to:

ID	Learning Outcome
T1	Perform tasks with personal motivation, organisation, and time-management.
T2	Organise your methodologies in order to work within a framework of professional values/code of conduct, as well as addressing social and ethical issues in your work.
T3	Acquire a complex knowledge and critical understanding of the production practices currently utilised by animation professionals.
T4	Compose a professional demo reel and CV that can be used to secure future employment in the animation sector.

Graduate Attributes

The BNU Graduate Attributes of: Knowledge and its application; Creativity; Social and ethical awareness and responsibility; and Leadership and self-development 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.

On this programme, attributes are developed by equipping learners with the skills needed to succeed as a 3D animator in the animation and games industries, through the practical and creative application of some of the fundamental skills of animation design and character development, locomotion, mechanics, creature creation. Throughout the programme, you will obtain a practical understanding of the skills required to produce industry-level animatied scenes and to critically analyse the history as well as the latest trends in aesthetics and technology of the animation industry (K1-3, C1-4, P1-3, T1-4). Carefully designed workshops will develop skills, and you will be given valuable practical insights into design problem solving, effective showreel creation, portfolio development, contributing to the attributes of leadership and self-development (P1, P2, T2, T4). You will acquire the knowledge to evaluate critically the importance of cultivating unique, personal entrepreneurial skills in order to understand the needs of the contemporary animation industry in a professional international environment, contributing to social and ethical awareness and responsibility (K4, C4).

4. Entry Requirements

The University's general entry requirements will apply to admission to this programme with the following additions / exceptions:

- An academic qualification equivalent to a BSc (Hons) Degree in a relevant subject area, 2:2 classification or better.

If you do not meet the entry requirements you may, if you have relevant professional experience, still be invited for interview, where you will be required to demonstrate the necessary knowledge and understanding for entry onto the course.

Previous study, professional and / or vocational experiences may be recognised as the equivalent learning experience and permit exemption from studying certain modules in accordance with our accreditation of prior learning (APL) process.

5. Programme Structure

Pathway 1 or stand-alone course **[add further tables for each additional pathway]**

Level	Modules (Code, Title and Credits)	Exit Awards
Level 7	**Core modules:** Animation 1 – Locomotion (20 credits) Animation 2 – Animation Mechanics (20 credits) Animation 3 - Character Performance (20 credits) Animation 4 – Animals & Creatures (20 credits) Professional Preparation (20 credits) Client Brief (20 credits) Research Project (60 credits)	**Postgraduate Certificate (PGCert)**, awarded on achievement of 60 credits, *excluding* the Research Project **Postgraduate Diploma (PGDip)**, awarded on achievement of 120 credits, *excluding* the Research Project **Master's Degree (MA)**, awarded on achievement of 180 credits, *including* the Research Project

Please note: Not all option modules will necessarily be offered in any one year. Other option modules may also be introduced at a later stage enabling the programme to respond to changes in the subject area.

6. Learning, Teaching and Assessment

Learning and teaching

- Video tutorials and lectures on how to compose complex animation projects that are industry-standard and meticulously put together so that they respond to briefs as if one were working in a high-pressure professional environment
- Individual online tutorials for identifying specific issues to do with the learners' individual projects, written assignments, personal research, and progress within the course
- Seminars on particular issues that the learners need extensive support with, especially those issues that can benefit from a group-form situation
- Online group chatroom for crits in which learners have the opportunity to upload their work-in-progress practical projects and receive feedback from their peers
- Selective online masterclasses by leading practitioners on the animation industry
- Frequent email communication on both issues of practice and theory in which learners can contact tutors on their personal projects and discuss their development without having to do it face to face (suitable for those that work long hours alongside the course)
- Animation apprentice blog: a resource that is updated daily, in which learners have the opportunity to see a number of videos created by both those on the course and other practitioners and read news about the latest trends of the animation industry and theory
- Personalised practical video feedback which is attached to the learners' practical assignment hand-ins and which are explained in detail frame-by-frame
- Portfolio creation sessions in which learners are taught how to present material in a professional context - this is a task that will be important throughout an animator's career
- Professional reel creation in which learners are taught how to put together a short presentation of their work, which will be particularly important in the initial stages of an animator's careers or in moments of career change

Assessment

- 4 practical assignments on locomotion, mechanics, character, animals/creatures
- 1 demo reel showcasing the learner's best work in a short format
- 1 portfolio and CV presenting the learner's best work in an extended format
- 1 essay on the history and development of the industry
- 1 report on a statistical issue of the industry
- 1 dissertation draft on a topic of the learner's choice
- 1 literature review on a topic of the learner's choice
- 1 dissertation final on a topic of the learner's choice

Contact Hours

In this part-time course, you can expect to receive up to 8 hours of scheduled learning activities per week. This may include lectures, seminars, workshops, or tutorial hours. A full breakdown of contact hours can be found in individual module descriptors.

7. Programme Regulations

This programme will be subject to the following assessment regulations:

- Academic Assessment Regulations

8. Support for learners

The following systems are in place to support you to be successful with your studies:

- The appointment of a personal tutor to support you through your programme
- A programme handbook and induction at the beginning of your studies
- Library resources, include access to books, journals, and databases - many of which are available in electronic format – and support from trained library staff
- Access to Blackboard, our Virtual Learning Environment (VLE), which is accessible via PC, laptop, tablet, or mobile device
- Access to the MyBNU portal where you can access all University systems, information, and news, record your attendance at sessions, and access your personalised timetable
- Academic Registry staff providing general guidance on University regulations, exams, and other aspects of students and course administration
- Central student services, including teams supporting academic skills development, career success, student finance, accommodation, chaplaincy, disability, and counselling
- Support from the Bucks Students' Union, including the Students' Union Advice Centre which offers free and confidential advice on University processes.

9. Programme monitoring and review

BNU has a number of ways for monitoring and reviewing the quality of learning and teaching on your programme. You will be able to comment on the content of their programme via the following feedback mechanisms:

- Formal feedback questionnaires and anonymous module 'check-ins'
- Participation in external surveys
- Programme Committees, via appointed student representatives
- Informal feedback to your programme leader

Quality and standards on each programme are assured via the following mechanisms:

- An initial event to approve the programme for delivery
- An annual report submitted by the External Examiner following a process of external moderation of work submitted for assessment
- The Annual Monitoring process, which is overseen by the University's Education Committee
- Review by the relevant PSRB(s)

- Periodic Subject Review events held every five years
- Other sector compliance and review mechanisms

10. Internal and external reference points

Design and development of this programme has been informed by the following internal and external reference points:

- The Framework for Higher Education Qualifications (FHEQ)
- The QAA Subject Benchmark Statement – see detailed mapping below
- The QAA Master's Degree Characteristics Statement
- The BNU Qualifications and Credit Framework
- The BNU Grading Descriptors
- The University Strategy

Mapping of Subject Benchmark Statement and any relevant Apprenticeship Standard to Programme Learning Outcomes

Subject Benchmark Statement / Apprenticeship Standard:	Knowledge and understanding (K)					Analysis and Criticality (C)					Application and Practice (P)				Transferable skills and other attributes (T)			
Benchmark / Standard requirement	K1	K2	K3	K4	K5	C1	C2	C3	C4	C5	P1	P2	P3	P4	T1	T2	T3	T4
Demonstrate in-depth and advanced knowledge and understanding of their subject and/or profession, informed by current practice, scholarship and research	x	x	x	x	x													
Evidence critical awareness of current issues and developments in the subject and/or profession						x	x	x	x	x								x
Apply knowledge of professional responsibility, integrity and ethics															x	x	x	
Reflect on their own progress as a learner						x	x	x	x	x								
Apply research and critical perspectives to professional situations,			x		x	x	x	x	x	x								

Subject Benchmark Statement / Apprenticeship Standard:	Knowledge and understanding (K)					Analysis and Criticality (C)					Application and Practice (P)				Transferable skills and other attributes (T)			
Benchmark / Standard requirement	**K1**	**K2**	**K3**	**K4**	**K5**	**C1**	**C2**	**C3**	**C4**	**C5**	**P1**	**P2**	**P3**	**P4**	**T1**	**T2**	**T3**	**T4**
both practical and theoretical																		
Evidence the ability to use a range of techniques and research methods applicable to their professional activities.											x	x	x	x				
Equipped with skills to enter a variety of types of employment (either subject-specific or generalist) and possess the skills and experience necessary specialist practice.											x	x	x	x				

Mapping of Programme Learning Outcomes to Modules

Programme Learning Outcome	Knowledge and understanding (K)					Analysis and Criticality (C)					Application and Practice (P)				Transferable skills and other attributes (T)			
Module Code (Core)	K1	K2	K3	K4	K5	C1	C2	C3	C4	C5	P1	P2	P3	P4	T1	T2	T3	T4
Level 7																		
Animation 1 – Locomotion	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x
Animation 2 – Animation Mechanics	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x
Animation 3 - Character Performance	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x
Animation 4 – Animals & Creatures	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x
Professional Preparation	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x
Client Brief	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x
Research & Dissertation	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x					x	x	x	x