

## 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.

<b>Programme Title:</b>	
<b>BA (Hons) Visual Effects</b>	
<b>Programme (AOS) Code(s):</b>	<b>BM1VSE9</b>
<b>UCAS Code:</b>	<b>TBC</b>
<b>Name of Final Award:</b>	<b>Bachelor of Arts with Honours, BA (Hons)</b>
<b>Level of Qualification:</b>	<b>Level 6</b>
<b>Regime of Delivery:</b>	<b>Flexible &amp; Distributed Learning: Online Learning</b>
<b>Mode(s) of Delivery:</b>	<b>Full Time</b>
<b>Typical Length of Study (Years):</b>	<b>3 years</b>
<b>Professional Body Recognition / Accreditation (including specific requirements where applicable):</b>	<b>NA</b>

### Brief Description of the Programme

Visual Effects (vfx) is a continually evolving aspect of CGI that is always in high-demand and is employed in many different areas of the media industry, including film, television, games and commercials.

Digital vfx requires a blend of both technical and artistic skill and knowledge. Currently, many of the UK's industry-leading vfx studios find that graduates are often skilled in one, but not the other. As a result, they struggle to recruit suitable candidates locally.

This online course seeks to address this imbalance by equipping the student with technical and artistic expertise designed to enhance their employment opportunities in the industry. Throughout the course, there is a continuing focus on professional practice. Using the Bucks Anywhere app students will be introduced to the fundamental knowledge and technical skills they need to succeed. They will also gain insight and understanding in the way the industry is organized and how it currently operates. They will develop professional networks, build a portfolio and be pushed to hone their work to meet the exacting standards professional vfx requires. Learners will be guided and advised by experienced staff on how to construct and present their portfolio in a way that maximizes their potential for employment.

Where possible, combined assignments will be a key feature of the programme, enabling students to apply and combine their learning and skills in an appropriate context while also keeping assessments distinct and clear.

## Programme Aims

1	Provide a flexible framework for undergraduate 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:	
<b>Graduate Attribute: Knowledge and its application (K)</b>	
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.
<b>Graduate Attribute: Creativity (C)</b>	
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.
<b>Graduate Attribute: Social and ethical awareness and responsibility (S)</b>	
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.
<b>Graduate Attribute: Leadership and self-development (L)</b>	
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.

### Level Four

Code	Module Title	Credit	Core / Option	Compensable (Normally Yes)
FX418	3D Modelling & Pipeline	30	C	Yes
FX419	Texturing & Look Development	15	C	Yes
FX420	Lighting & Rendering	15	C	Yes
FX421	Animation Principles & The Moving Figure	30	C	Yes
FX417	Visual Narrative	15	C	Yes
FX422	Rigging	15	C	Yes

**Level 5**

Code	Module Title	Credit	Core / Option	Compensable (Normally Yes)
FX537	Compositing 1	15	C	Yes
FX538	Compositing 2	15	C	Yes
FX539	Modelling & Look Development	30	C	Yes
FX540	Digital Sculpting and Organic Modelling	15	C	Yes
FX533	Destruction Simulation	15	C	Yes
FX547	Character FX	30	C	Yes

**Level Six**

Code	Module Title	Credit	Core / Option	Compensable (Normally Yes)
FX609	Industry Production Project	30	C	Yes
FX610	Portfolio Piece	30	C	No
FX611	Creative Production Project	30	C	Yes
FX612	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 to develop and build their learning, knowledge and skills 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.

- 1:1 feedback and support during class time
- Video Feedback
- File reviews
- Course Video Tutorials
- Peer review
- Students will be expected to read articles, 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, particularly for introducing and 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, but can nevertheless significantly influence the depth of a student's development.

- Students will need to devote substantial independent study time, outside of the allocated course hours, to practice extending and refining their skills beyond the material taught.
- Students will be given additional workshops on academic references, analytical writing and evaluation each year.

Some learning will occur through asynchronous sessions that will be focused on the clarification and expansion of key concepts and techniques. This learning will be facilitated via an online learning platform, where students work through a set of recorded lectures totalling 60 to 90 minutes each. These will be delivered for approximately 10 weeks, as appropriate to the module. Each week students will be set a task related to the weekly content. Students will be able to complete these tasks using software accessed via the Bucks Anywhere service, which provides remote access, from any location, to a catalogue of University software applications for students using personal or Bucks devices. Weekly group meetings will provide the opportunity for peer discussion and tutor feedback on the tasks.

Each week the concepts, skills and ideas introduced will be discussed via an online forum of staff and students. During these synchronous sessions, students will have the opportunity to ask questions to the module leader and get real time responses and feedback. These collaborative online sessions will foster a sense of academic community, clarify assessment expectations and enhance the overall learning experience. They will play a key role in fostering a sense of a learning community and the opportunity for real-time dialogue between tutor and students.

Clear links will be made between online learning activities, discussion activities and formative support of the students' assessed work (feed forward). Detailed feedback on work that has been completed will be provided via virtual meetings between the student and tutor. Further formative assessment opportunities will be provided via online discussion activities in which students will be encouraged to share and comment on ideas and plans with each other and with the tutor.

### **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 have access to industry standard software via the BucksAnywhere platform.

Students will also need have the following:

- An up-to-date laptop or personal computer with a good processor, a good amount of RAM (I would have thought ideally 16GB and upwards), a good graphics card and a large hard drive . Approx. £1000 - £2000 depending on budget and spec. It may be possible to use a lower spec machine but this may negatively impact the quality of the experience.
- 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. We recommend this but it is optional
- Pen drives for file transfer. 32GB from £5. We recommend this but it is optional.

## 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
- Dailies

Dailies:

Dailies are standard practice in the vfx industry and are a creative space for ideas and feedback on your work. In the industry, the life of many artists is comprised of going to a daily team review session which will be led by a senior supervisor/director 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 is an ongoing daily process until the animation work on the production is completed. The ability to listen to, and respond positively to feedback and notes from your peers is an essential part of the creative process in the industry.

We recognize an educational environment can never fully replicate the demands of the industry, so instead of 'daily' feedback there will be regular reviews which will, as far as possible, mimic this process and prepare students for the process of accommodating and responding positively to feedback on their work. 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 keep and submit a learning journal for most modules (see descriptors). These are expected to be illustrative, annotated and analytical rather than descriptive in nature. We expect students to devote at least one hour per week to updating their journals.

The learning journal gives the student an opportunity to show how they work, the choices they make and the opportunity to discuss and justify these decisions. It is intended to give them the space to provide supporting evidence regarding the creative choices exercised and informing influences on their work. The learning journal will 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 to evolve own work over a period of time

Each assignment brief will make the function and expectations of the journal clear and will set out how these expectations are 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. Students will be expected to adopt appropriate academic conventions in the writing and referencing of the material in their journals.

In addition to the journal, students will be able to offer a reflective engagement with their work by voice recording and annotating over submitted sequences. These can then be submitted in addition to the journal, but should not duplicate the journal content.

## Classification

<b>Calculation of final award:</b>	<b>Level 5 - 33% / Level 6 – 67%</b>
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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.

<b>Do applicants required a Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) Check?</b>	<b>No</b>
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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 Student Learning and Achievement Unit for skills and study support, the Library and Learning Resources, the Student Opportunities and Career Success Team, Student Finance Team, Accommodation and Counselling Services

## Appendices

### Quality Assurance

<b>Awarding Body:</b>	Bucks New University
<b>Language of Study:</b>	English
<b>QAA Subject Benchmark Statement(s):</b>	Art and Design (2016)
<b>Assessment Regulations:</b>	<i>Academic Assessment Regulations</i> , accessible via the Academic Advice webpages ( <a href="https://bucks.ac.uk/students/academicadvice">https://bucks.ac.uk/students/academicadvice</a> )
<b>Does the Fitness to Practise procedure apply to this programme?</b>	No
<b>Date Published / Updated:</b>	September 2021

### 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.

<b>Name of Exit Qualification:</b>	Ordinary Degree
<b>Full name of Qualification and Award Title:</b>	BA Visual Effects
<b>Credits requirements:</b>	300 Credits
<b>Module requirements:</b>	ALL 120 Credits at Level 4 ALL 120 Credits at Level 5 PLUS 60 credits at Level 6 (excluding FX610)
<b>Learning Outcome</b>	
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.	

<b>Name of Exit Qualification:</b>	<b>Diploma of Higher Education (DipHE)</b>
<b>Full name of Qualification and Award Title:</b>	<b>DipHE Visual Effects</b>
<b>Credits requirements:</b>	<b>240 Credits</b>
<b>Module requirements:</b>	<b>ALL 120 Credits at Level 4 ALL 120 Credits at Level 5</b>
<b>Learning Outcome</b>	
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.	

<b>Name of Exit Qualification:</b>	<b>Certificate of Higher Education (CertHE)</b>
<b>Full name of Qualification and Award Title:</b>	<b>CertHE Visual Effects</b>
<b>Credits requirements:</b>	<b>120 Credits</b>
<b>Module requirements:</b>	<b>ALL 120 Credits at Level 4</b>
<b>Learning Outcome</b>	
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.