

PROGRAMME SPECIFICATION

1. Key Information

Programme Title:	BA (Hons) Visual Effects BA (Hons) Visual Effects with Foundation Year
Awarding Institution:	Buckinghamshire New University
Teaching Institution(s):	Buckinghamshire New University
Subject Cluster:	Animation, Games & Visual Effects
Award Title (including separate Pathway Award Titles where offered):	BA (Hons) Visual Effects
Pathways (if applicable)	N/A
FHEQ level of final award:	6
Other award titles available (exit qualifications):	Certificate of Higher Education, Diploma of Higher Education, BA Visual Effects
Accreditation details:	N/A
Length of programme:	3 years 4 years with Foundation Year
Mode(s) of Study:	Full Time
Mode of Delivery:	In person (on-site) delivery
Language of study:	English
QAA Subject Benchmark(s):	Art and Design (2019)
Other external reference points (e.g. Apprenticeship Standard):	
Course Code(s):	BAVISUFT / BAVISUFY
UCAS Code(s):	VEF1 VEF4
Approval date:	01 December 2022
Date of last update:	March 2025

2. Programme Summary

Visual Effects (VFX) is a continually evolving and exciting subject that is applied in many different areas of the industry, including film, television, games and commercials. This course presents you with an opportunity to study Visual Effects with a focus on professional practice. It is designed to give you the fundamental skills required and enhance your employment opportunities in the VFX industry by creating a strong portfolio of work to display your talent in a diverse range of relevant skills.

3. Programme Aims and Learning Outcomes

Programme Aims

This programme aims to:

1. Provide a flexible framework for under-graduate study which offers visual effects learners the opportunity to develop their knowledge skills and understanding, achieving mastery of their chosen specialism
2. Develop personal and professional insights which will enable learners 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

Knowledge and Understanding (K)

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

ID	Learning Outcome
K1	Manage and make appropriate use of the interaction between intention, process and outcome to create outcomes conforming to the requirements of a client brief
K2	Demonstrate a systematic understanding of key concepts of the creative process and the constraints imposed by practical considerations.
K3	Engage critically with key thinkers, leading producers, debates and intellectual paradigms within the field of visual effects.
K4	Outline the implications of intellectual property including the ethical responsibilities associated with working with confidential material.
K5	Employ a range of established research techniques for visual effects projects or associated creative productions, demonstrating the exercise of personal responsibility in decision making.

Analysis and Criticality (C)

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

ID	Learning Outcome
C1	Evaluate the appropriateness of different problem-solving approaches as applied to different contexts.
C2	Make sound judgements in the visual effects production process through critically evaluating data, arguments and assumptions.
C3	Assess and critically evaluate their own work in the context of contemporary practice and with reference to well established academic and professional paradigms
C4	Select production techniques consistent with contemporary industry pipelines to plan and manage work conforming to professional standards.

Application and Practice (P)

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

ID	Learning Outcome
P1	Use a range of established techniques beyond the context in which they were studied in order to deliver a suitable outcome within a fixed time scale.
P2	Generate ideas, proposals for visual effects projects working independently and or collaboratively as in response to set briefs.
P3	Exercise the qualities and collaborative skills necessary for employment and progression to other qualifications demonstrating personal responsibility and decision making.
P4	Apply experimental and appropriate use of materials, processes, technologies and environments showing understanding of quality standards and attention to detail.
P5	Initiate and develop distinctive and visual effects work that implements technical concepts and theories appropriately.

Transferable skills and other attributes (T)

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

ID	Learning Outcome
T1	Work with others in groups to sustain exploratory discussions, generate ideas and explore diverse opinions with respect and critical acumen.
T2	Collaborate on practical tasks and presentations offering and accepting constructive criticism, meeting group deadlines, making decisions and fulfilling group objectives.
T3	Communicate results and analysis in a coherent and structured manner which is both reliable and accurate to a team, taking into account the views of others.
T4	Show the ability to listen, reflect, contribute and lead effectively within a variety of contexts.
T5	Manage their workload demonstrating resilience under pressure.

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.

As an aspiring computer graphics artist in the fields of animation, visual effects or game art you will grow through the development of your knowledge via demonstrations, workshops and your own research (K2, K3, K4, K5). You will develop practical skills through the application of your knowledge to a series of increasingly challenging tasks, assignments and projects (P1, P2, P3, P4, P5). Through problem solving, self-reflection and critical evaluation you will learn to elevate the standard of your work to that of a creative professional (K1, C1, C2, C3, C4). In your response to briefs you will learn to operate productively both individually and collaboratively, managing complex tasks to demanding deadlines, while communicating your ideas and outcomes in a structured and coherent manner (T1, T2, T3, T4, T5).

4. Entry Requirements

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

- Standard BNU entry + portfolio

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

Level	Modules (Code, Title and Credits)	Exit Awards
Foundation Year	Core modules: COM0001 Introduction to 3D Virtual Worlds COM0002 Games Engines Essentials COM0003 Art Foundation COM0004 Filmmaking Fundamentals COM0009 Professional Skills Review COM0010 Final Project	N/A. No credit is awarded at this Level.
Level 4	Core modules: COM4001 Introduction to 3D Modelling (20cr) COM4002 Texturing and Look Development (20cr) COM4003 Lighting and Rendering (20cr) COM4007 Visual Narrative (20cr) COM4045 Animation 1: Animation Principles (20cr) COM4042 3D Particle Simulation (20cr)	Certificate of Higher Education , awarded on achievement of 120 credits at Level 4
Level 5	Core modules: COM5027 Digital Sculpting (20cr) COM5029 Character FX (20cr) COM5023 Advanced 3D Modelling (20cr) COM5056 Project (20cr) COM5028 Compositing (20cr) COM5033 Simulated FX (20cr)	Diploma of Higher Education , awarded on achievement of 240 credits, including a minimum of 120 credits at Level 5
Level 6	Core modules: COM6019 Industry Production Project (20cr) COM6020 Showreel (20cr) COM6021 Creative Project: Preproduction (20cr) COM6022 Portfolio (40cr)	Ordinary Degree , awarded on achievement of 300 credits, including 60 credits at Level 6 and 120 credits at each of Levels 4 and 5

	COM6024 Creative Project: Production (20cr)	Honours Degree , awarded on achievement of 360 credits, including 120 credits at each of Levels, 4, 5 and 6
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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

The expectation is that the bulk of delivery (min 75%) will be face to face. Some industry-based lecturers will be delivered online. Learners can also choose to take the fully online version of the same course.

Learners will spend time learning and practicing the skills required by each unit before undertaking summative assessments the form of projects which will enable them to apply and combine their newfound skills together in a meaningful way while tackling tasks commonly found in the industry.

Classes will take place in appropriate computer labs which will be equipped with advanced computers capable of running the various pieces of software we use and will allow learners to explore their subject to the standard that a junior professional will be able to achieve.

Learners will attend classes each week with a lecturer present. During these sessions, they will also have the opportunity to ask questions and get real time responses and feedback from both lecturers and other learners. Normally these will begin with a group seminar or demonstration and then break into 1:1s where learners will have the opportunity to discuss their individual progress directly with their lecturer. This structure will enable lecturers to respond to the evolving needs of the group and gauge individual progress. Sometimes these seminars will be used for presentations and review in a manner that mimics the dailies process in industry.

These collaborative sessions will foster a sense of academic community, clarify assessment expectations and enhance the overall learning experience. Clear links will be made between learning activities including online discussion activities and formative support of the learners' assessed work (feed forward).

In addition to this there will be video based lecture content that will be focused on the demonstration of essential skills and clarification and expansion of key concepts and techniques. This will be facilitated via an online learning platform, where learners will be able to access set of recorded lectures which will each be on average approximately 10 minutes in length. These will be delivered as appropriate to each individual module.

Other learning techniques that will be employed appropriately to the situation include:

- Demonstrations for new techniques
- Group work
- Video feedback
- Peer review
- Use of books, magazines, video and online resources
- Research methods

Learners will be regularly set formative tasks related to the weekly content or be working towards their own project objective as agreed with the lecturers. This will enable them to apply their learning in new contexts. They will also be able to submit their work for asynchronous formative review from the lecturer which will be delivered as a video commentary on their work.

Learners will also be expected to join a closed online group where they will be able to discuss the work and ask questions throughout the week. It is expected that both lecturers

and learners will contribute and answer questions. This will also be a place for learners to post their work for peer discussion and review.

Learners will be able to complete their work using the hardware and software in the labs as well as the software accessed via the Bucks Anywhere service, which provides remote access, from any location to a catalogue of University software applications for learners using personal or Bucks devices. They will also be able to remotely access our VDI, which is a powerful computer that will give them access to both sufficiently powered hardware and the software relevant to the course. To use the VDI they will need a laptop capable of running a browser smoothly and a good internet connection.

Learners will also be invited to join additional online groups where they will be able to meet the other learners taking our animation, visual effects, game art, visualisation courses, both MA and BA, online and attendance. These help to foster a sense of community and are also places where extra-curricular collaborative projects, such as game jams take place. They will also be able to meet our alumni in these broader forums. All forums are moderated by the lecturers.

Assessment

Assessments will be largely practical coursework along with critical analysis and evaluation which will come mainly in the form of essays and presentations. The practical elements will mimic the kind of work that junior artists will carry out in industry, as far as reasonably practicable

Contact Hours

Groups will receive 12 hours of contact time and 1 hr of tutor time each week, for a total of 30 weeks.

7. Programme Regulations

This programme will be subject to the following assessment regulations:

- Regulations for Taught Degree Programmes (2023)

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 learners and course administration

- Central learner services, including teams supporting academic skills development, career success, learner finance, accommodation, chaplaincy, disability and counselling
- Support from the Bucks Learners' Union, including the Learners' 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 learner 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 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)				
	K1	K2	K3	K4	K5	C1	C2	C3	C4	P1	P2	P3	P4	P5	T1	T2	T3	T4	T5
Generate ideas, concepts, proposals, solutions or arguments independently and/or collaboratively as self-initiated activity and/or in response to set briefs	X	X			X		X				X	X		X	X	X	X		
Employ both convergent and divergent thinking in the processes of observation, investigation, speculative enquiry, visualisation and/or making	X	X	X		X	X	X		X	X	X	X	X	X		X		X	
Select, experiment with and make appropriate use of materials, processes, technologies and environments showing understanding of quality	X	X			X	X	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	P1	P2	P3	P4	P5	T1	T2	T3	T4	T5
standards and attention to detail																			
Show judgement and self-critique in the development ideas through to outcomes, for example images, artefacts, environments, products, systems and processes, or texts	x	x	x		x		x	x	x	x	x	x							x
Manage and make appropriate use of the interaction between intention, process, outcome, context, and the methods of dissemination	x						x	x		x	x	x		x					x
Be resourceful, ethical and entrepreneurial.	x	x	x		x		x	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	P1	P2	P3	P4	P5	T1	T2	T3	T4	T5
the critical, contextual, historical, conceptual, economic, social environmental and ethical dimensions of the learner's discipline in particular, and art and design in general		X	X		X			X											
the creative practitioner's relationship with audiences, clients, markets, environments, users, consumers, participants, co-workers and co-creators within a professional environment	X	X	X				X	X			X	X	X		X	X			X
the implications and potential for their discipline(s) presented by			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	P1	P2	P3	P4	P5	T1	T2	T3	T4	T5
the key developments of current and emerging media and technologies, and of inter and multi-disciplinary approaches to contemporary practice in art and design																			
Knowledge and understanding of the role and impact of IP within the art and design practice.				X	X							X							
Study independently, set goals, manage workloads and meet deadlines	X	X							X			X				X			X
Anticipate and accommodate change, and work within contexts of	X	X				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	P1	P2	P3	P4	P5	T1	T2	T3	T4	T5
ambiguity, uncertainty and unfamiliarity																			
Analyse information and experiences, and formulate independent judgements	x		x			x	x	x	x	x	x				x	x	x	x	
Articulate reasoned arguments through reflection			x				x	x	x		x				x	x	x	x	
Question, review and evaluate			x		x	x	x	x	x	x	x				x	x		x	
Use the views of others in the development or enhancement of their work								x			x	x			x	x	x	x	

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Benchmark / Standard requirement	K1	K2	K3	K4	K5	C1	C2	C3	C4	P1	P2	P3	P4	P5	T1	T2	T3	T4	T5
Identify personal strengths and needs, and reflect on personal development					X		X					X			X	X	X	X	X
Interact effectively with others, for example through collaboration, collective endeavour and negotiation	X							X			X	X			X	X	X	X	
Articulate ideas and information comprehensibly in visual, oral and written forms	X	X			X	X	X				X	X			X	X	X	X	
Communicate and present ideas and work to audiences in a range of 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	P1	P2	P3	P4	P5	T1	T2	T3	T4	T5
Source and research relevant material, assimilating and articulating relevant findings		X	X		X	X		X			X	X	X			X		X	
Navigate, select, retrieve, evaluate, manipulate and manage information from a variety of sources		X	X		X	X	X	X			X	X						X	
Select and employ communication and information technologies		X			X						X	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	P1	P2	P3	P4	P5	T1	T2	T3	T4	T5
Level 4																			
Introduction to 3D Modelling (20cr)	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x		x	x		x	x	x	x	x
Texturing and Look Development (20cr)	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x		x	x			x		x	x
Animation 1: Animation Principles (20cr)	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x		x	x		x	x	x	x	x	x
Visual Narrative (20cr)	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x
Lighting and Rendering (20cr)	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x
3D Particle Simulation (20cr)	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x		x	x		x		x		x	x
Level 5																			
Project (20cr)	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x
Advanced 3D Modelling (20cr)	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x				x	x
Digital Sculpting (20Cr)	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x				x	x
Character FX (20cr)	x	x	x		x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x				x	x
Compositing (20cr)	x	x	x		x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x				x	x

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	P1	P2	P3	P4	P5	T1	T2	T3	T4	T5
Simulated FX (20cr)	x	x	x		x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x				x	x
Level 6																			
Industry Production Project (20cr)	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x
Portfolio (40cr)	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x				x	x
Showreel (20cr)	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x				x	x
Creative Project: Preproduction (20cr)	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x
Creative Project: Production (20cr)	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x