# Film and Television

Programme Specification

ARTS UNIVERSITY BOURNEMOUTH

**PROGRAMME SPECIFICATION**

The Programme Specification provides a summary of the main features of the **BA (Hons) Visual Effects (VFX) for Film and Television** course, and the learning outcomes that a 'typical' student might reasonably be expected to achieve and demonstrate if they pass the course.

Further detailed information on the learning outcomes, content and teaching and learning methods of each unit may be found in the Unit Descriptors, which forms part of this Handbook.

| Key Course Information | |
|---|---|
| Final Award | BA (Hons) |
| Course Title | Visual Effects (VFX) for Film and Television |
| Award Title | BA (Hons) Visual Effects (VFX) for Film and Television |
| Teaching institution | Arts University Bournemouth |
| Awarding Institution | Arts University Bournemouth |
| Offered in the School of | Bournemouth Film School |
| Professional accreditation | None |
| Length of course / mode of study | 3 Years full-time |
| Level of final award (in FHEQ) | Level 6 |
| Subject benchmark statements | Communication, Media, Film and Cultural Studies Art and Design |
| UCAS code | 245K |
| Language of study | English |
| External Examiner for course: | To be confirmed |
| *Please note that it is not appropriate for students to contact external examiners directly.* | |
| Date of Validation | 2015 |
| Date of most recent review | N/A |
| Date programme specification written/revised | September 2022 |

**Course Description**

Visual effects is an innovative area of contemporary design; its blending of art and technology calls for practitioners who are both technically skilled and aesthetically aware. The course is designed to equip you with strong observational skills and the ability to apply these skills in the composing of a final moving image. In order to cultivate these abilities, the course articulates effects practice as possessing a

distinct visual language that informs the core of cinematic storytelling and production design.

The course will give you a detailed knowledge of the production context and an understanding of related disciplines that informs visual effects practice. Alongside technical knowledge of industry standard software and hardware, the course emphasizes the importance of complementary art and design skills, which will inform and enhance your abilities as a practitioner. It recognises the international aspects of visual effects practice, and the possibility for artists to work as part of a global marketplace. The resulting portfolio of skills will inform your personal aspirations in preparation for entry into postgraduate study or professional practice.

The course believes in both the development of independent study skills and the experience of team-based production processes that replicate industry best practice, thereby encouraging awareness of collaborative roles and personal responsibilities required for a successful ethical practitioner. By supporting both group and independent modes of study, the course encourages an engagement with visual effects in the broadest possible sense. It promotes the opportunity for collaboration with other disciplines, and encourages the potential for multiple outcomes beyond an immediate application in the film industry. As part of a studio-based environment at the AUB, there is a distinctive opportunity for you to explore the historical, social and cultural parameters of effects practice in relation to other areas of art and design.

The course is committed to produce creative practitioners who are aware of the demands of contemporary practice and possess finely honed artistic skills that will enable them to pursue a career in visual effects and related media industries.

## **Course Aims**

The course has the following aims:

- To develop strong observational skills through traditional practices in art and design that complement the visual effects process

- To develop skills relevant to specialist production roles, which includes detailed knowledge of the production context in which these roles operate and an understanding of related disciplines that inform this specialist practice

- To equip each individual artist with the necessary depth of knowledge to address a range of professional visual effects problems

- To produce artists with the skills to research, analyse and communicate information as well as interpret briefs to an industry standard

- To develop knowledge and critical understanding of historical and cultural contexts that inform visual effects practice

- To develop and nurture an awareness of ethical work practices as part of a team, which informs the roles and responsibilities of artists within the visual effects and related media industries

- To equip artists with the capability to critically reflect on their personal and professional aspirations in relation to the global nature of the visual effects industry

## Course Outcomes

By the end of the course you will be able to:

- Confidently demonstrate strong observational skills through traditional practices in art and design that complement the visual effects process

- Demonstrate skills relevant to your specialist profile, with detailed knowledge of the production context in which you work and an understanding of related disciplines that inform your practice

- Demonstrate a depth of knowledge that allows you to address a range of professional visual effects problems

- Demonstrate skills in research, analysis and communication to interpret briefs to an industry standard
- Demonstrate knowledge and critical understanding of historical and cultural contexts that inform visual effects practice

- Demonstrate an awareness of ethical work practices as part of a team, which includes an informed understanding of the roles and responsibilities of artists within the visual effects and related media industries

- Demonstrate the ability to critically reflect on your personal and professional aspirations in relation to the global nature of the visual effects industry

## Reference Points

UK Quality Code for higher education, including:
- Subject Benchmark Statement:
  - *Communication, Media, Film and Cultural Studies*
  - *Art and Design*
- Framework for Higher Education Qualifications (FHEQ)
AUB Regulatory Framework and Undergraduate Assessment Regulations

## Learning and Teaching Strategies

The study time allocated to each unit in the course incorporates a balance of formal teaching, tutorial support and independent learning. The course is structured progressively to provide increasing opportunities for independent study as you reach the later stages of the course.

Teaching is directed at supporting your individual engagement in learning. There are also opportunities to work in teams to enable experiential learning from a production environment that includes peer cooperation.

There may also be occasions where digital delivery is appropriate.  Where this is the case, this might include on-line lectures, seminars, presentations, and one to one

tutorials.  It is important that you engage with on-line course delivery in the same way that you would if you were on campus.

The progressive promotion of independent learning reflects your anticipated maturing as a learner, as you direct your studies towards your own specialist goals. The teaching in Level 4 is directed at providing you with the knowledge, concepts and skills to take increasing responsibility for the management of your own learning; this is a key element of the student-centred approach taken at Levels 5 and 6  and preparation for life in the work-place.

The delivery methods are informed by the University's Strategic Plan and share the over-arching aims:

i)      to enable each student to realise his/her potential;

ii)     to develop and support individual learner autonomy;

iii)    to promote the acquisition of transferable/key skills;

iv)    to develop and promote best practice in approaches to teaching, learning and assessment;

v)     to promote the sharing of good practice across the University, building on best practice both within the University and nationally.

## Assessment

Each unit is assessed separately, and the assessment forms part of the unit. Assessment both provides a measure of your achievement, and also gives you regular feedback on how your learning is developing.

For every unit of your course, we will inform you of what you are expected to learn; what you have to submit; how your work will be assessed; and the deadline for presenting your work for assessment.

A minimum of one unit at Level 4 will be assessed on a pass/fail basis, with written feedback but no numerical grade.  All other units will be given a percentage mark.

The final mark for each unit will be recorded on your formal record of achievement (transcript).  With the exception of the pass/fail unit, each component of assessment is graded using a notched marking scale, whereby only certain marks are used within each grade.  The only marks available within any ten-point band are *2, *5 and *8 (e.g. 62, 65, 68).  These marks correspond to a low, mid, and high level of achievement within each grade band.

All learning outcomes must be passed to successfully complete the unit.

On successful completion of your Honours degree course, you will be awarded a degree classification based on your unit marks.  The final classification is determined using all unit marks at Levels 5 and 6.

If you have joined Level 6 through either the Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) route or having completed a Foundation Degree (FdA), the final classification is determined using only your unit marks at Level 6.

For further information on assessment, progression, awards and classifications, please visit https://aub.ac.uk/regulations

## Course Structure

All students are registered for the award of BA (Hons); however, exit awards are available if you leave the course early, having successfully completed one or two levels.  If you successfully complete a level of the course, you will automatically be entitled to progress to the next level.

For the award of a Certificate of Higher Education (CertHE), you must have achieved a minimum of 120 credits at Level 4.  This qualification may be awarded if you leave the University following successful completion of the first year of your course.

For the award of a Diploma of Higher Education (DipHE), you must have achieved a minimum of 240 credits of which a minimum of 120 must be at Level 5.  This qualification may be awarded if you leave the University following successful completion of the second year of your course.

For the award of a BA (Hons) you must have achieved a minimum of 360 credits of which a minimum of 240 must be at Level 5 or above, of which a minimum of 120 credits must be at Level 6.  This qualification will be awarded upon successful completion of your course.

A BA without Honours may be awarded if you have achieved 300 credits, at least 180 of which are at Level 5 or above, and at least 60 of which are at Level 6.

## Core Values and Skills

In developing courses, the University wanted to create a curriculum that reflected its values and ethos.  It should prepare you for the future not only in enabling you to have a successful career, but we also want to empower you with the knowledge, skills and passion to have a positive impact on the world and be an agent for change.  We have drawn from the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) (https://sdgs.un.org/goals) which have informed our values of Equality, Diversity and Inclusion as well as our Graduate Attributes.

### Equalities Diversity and Inclusion (EDI)
"We are better for our diversity.  We are enriched by the depth of respect we have for each other and the strength of our relationships with our people, our places and the planet.  Through our commitment to working with those who are different to us, or challenge us, we grow stronger together, creating new synergies, global connections and sustainable futures." (AUB Strategy 2030)

As an organisation we have moral, social and legal obligations to fulfil in terms of EDI, and in doing so our commitment is to put EDI at the heart of every area of activity.  It is not covered as a separate, stand-alone section, rather it forms an integral part of the curriculum, throughout your study here.

**Graduate Attributes (GA)**

Over recent years, there has been an increasing pace of change, technological, social, environmental. This has been further impacted by the world-wide pandemic effecting significant change in the global economy and the employment market.

In this context, the University has recognised the importance of developing AUB graduates who have the attributes to be able to build their career, adapting to different circumstances and embracing changes. A suite of attributes have been defined that we feel are particularly appropriate to the creative courses that we deliver and to AUB's core values; during your course, both curricular and extra-curricular activities will give you the opportunity to prepare for your working career.

## Course Content

This course aims to develop technical skills and creative abilities required for visual effects production processes, thereby enhancing career opportunities in visual effects and related media industries. Analytical skills are developed and research methodologies are explored, enabling an appreciation of the relationship between practice, theory and history of visual effects production.

The course develops your ability to communicate and to use effective presentation skills. Alongside the development of professional management competence, the course aims to enhance visual and literary capabilities and the ability to resolve production problems.

The skills developed on this course are accompanied by general transferable skills which can be used in a range of applications. The promotion of your self-directed learning and your ability to critically evaluate your own work and that of others is fundamental to this team-based production course.

## Level 4

At this level students are introduced to the underlying concepts and fundamental structural principles of visual effects work, whilst developing an ability to evaluate and interpret the application of complementary art and design skills within visual effects practice. This level exposes students to the technical and technological disciplines necessary for visual effects work, helping to develop an appropriate knowledge of 2D and 3D software in preparation to develop new skills at Levels 5 and 6. A series of practical workshops, lectures and seminars, are used to build competencies in the generation of concepts, the construction of digital assets and the processing of live action footage. Alongside processing moving imagery, aesthetic awareness is developed through observational drawing and painting, utilising both traditional materials and digital solutions. This helps to develop an ability to evaluate different approaches to solving production problems. Practice is underpinned by an engagement with historical and cultural contexts, and students develop essential research and study skills which help them develop an ability to present, evaluate and interpret information from multiple sources.

## Level 5

At this level students develop a more nuanced understanding of the specialist roles involved in a collaborative production process by working both independently and as

part of a team. Students will build on skills developed at Level 4, applying aesthetic awareness and technical knowledge in a production context that reflects industry best practice. Students work with increasing independence as part of a production team to take a visual effects sequence from concept and previsualisation stages through to live action acquisition, asset creation and compositing. Production roles specialising in either 2D or 3D processes are negotiated with staff members and defined through the use of Learning Agreements, and students are assessed on their individual contribution to their collaborative projects. By deploying key techniques in processing imagery from multiple sources, students will begin to develop a specialist portfolio of skills relevant to an industry context. As part of the process of becoming an independent learner, there are also potential opportunities for industry placements or overseas study visits. Students will also work independently to research and develop their own visual effects sequence in preparation for a pitch process at Level 6. This developmental work will require the application of a range of established design techniques and research methods, including a sustained piece of academic writing, to effectively communicate ideas and identify limits of knowledge.

## Level 6

At this level students demonstrate a systematic understanding of visual effects practice by applying their specialist skills in a collaborative production process.  The intricate nature of visual effects design and production necessitates negotiating a complex body of knowledge, drawing on both artistic and technical skills in generating a final image sequence to an industry standard. Effective team work is paramount in successfully achieving a professional standard of production, and Level 6 develops critical awareness of co-operative roles and personal responsibilities that are required to make an ethical practitioner. There are opportunities for this collaborative production process to include working alongside other courses in the university. Students at this level work more independently in their production role, requiring effective time-management and organisational skills to evaluate concepts, make judgements and frame appropriate questions to solve production problems. Negotiated Learning Agreements are used to define the parameters of production roles and to help students independently manage a range of learning aspirations. Students are assessed on their individual contribution to this collaborative project. Through their written Investigative Study students engage in research activity, making appropriate use of literary and audio-visual resources in exploring the conceptual limits of their discipline. Individual research activity also takes the form of a Professional Development Portfolio, where students investigate an area of contemporary practice relevant to their career ambitions, and develop a portfolio appropriate for pursuing post-graduate study or initiating professional practice.

## Course Units

| Unit code | Unit Title | Credit weighting |
|---|---|---|
| **Level 4** | | |
| VFX487 | Previsualisation and Data Acquisition | 40 |
| VFX488 | 3D Production and Contextual Studies | 40 |
| VFX489 | Matte Painting and Compositing | 40 |
| **Level 5** | | |
| VFX510 | Specialist Production | 40 |
| VFX514 | Practice as Research | 40 |
| VFX512 | Concept and Look Development | 40 |
| **Level 6** | | |
| VFX610 | Production Design and Planning | 20 |
| VFX612 | Film Production | 60 |
| VFX614 | Professional Portfolio Development | 40 |

## Course Diagram

This diagram shows the proposed start/end dates for each unit and shows teaching weeks only; holiday periods are not included.

| | Level 4 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 | 11 | 12 | 13 | 14 | 15 | 16 | 17 | 18 | 19 | 20 | 21 | 22 | 23 | 24 | 25 | 26 | 27 | 28 | 29 | 30 |
| | Autumn Term | | | | | | | | | | Spring Term | | | | | | | | | | Summer Term | | | | | | | | | |
| Induction week | **VFX487 Previsualisation and Data Acquisition** **Weeks 1-10** (40 credits) | | | | | | | | | | **VFX488 3D Production and Contextual Studies** **Weeks 11-20** (40 credits) | | | | | | | | | | **VFX489 Matte Painting and Compositing** **Weeks 21-30** (40 credits) | | | | | | | | | |

| | Level 5 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 | 11 | 12 | 13 | 14 | 15 | 16 | 17 | 18 | 19 | 20 | 21 | 22 | 23 | 24 | 25 | 26 | 27 | 28 | 29 | 30 |
| | Autumn Term | | | | | | | | | | Spring Term | | | | | | | | | | Summer Term | | | | | | | | | |
| | **VFX512 Concept and Look Development** **(weeks 1-15)** (40 Credits) | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | **VFX510 Specialist Production** (Collaboration work with Film Graduation Projects BFS) **(weeks 16-30)** (40 credits) | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| | **VFX514 Practice as Research** **(weeks 1-30)** (40 Credits) | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |

**Level 6**

| 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 | 11 | 12 | 13 | 14 | 15 | 16 | 17 | 18 | 19 | 20 | 21 | 22 | 23 | 24 | 25 | 26 | 27 | 28 | 29 | 30 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|

| **Autumn Term** | **Spring Term** | **Summer Term** |
|---|---|---|
| **VFX610 Production Design and Planning (weeks 1-10)** (20 credits) | **VFX612 Film Production (weeks 11-30)** (60 credits) | |
| **VFX614 Professional Development Portfolio (weeks 16-30)** (40 Credits) | | |

**Reference list**

The following is an indicative (not exhaustive) list of reference materials and reading that are relevant to this course.

*These titles are indicative and updated lists will be provided during the delivery of the course.*

**Visual and Special Effects**

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Graduate Prospects (annual). *Prospects – the official graduate careers website*.
[Internet]. Manchester: Graduate Prospects. Available from:
http://www.prospects.ac.uk
Creative Skillset Website: creativeskillset.org

Other resources:

Thousands of e-journals can be accessed online through the library website
www.aub.ac.uk/library, physical copies of journals are also available in the library, a
selection of resources specific to the course are listed below;

**Journals:**

Animation: An Interdisciplinary Journal (paper and e-subscription via Library)
Animation Journal (paper subscription via Library)
Animation Practice, Process & Production (paper and e-subscription via Library)
Cinefex (paper subscription via Library)
Imagine (paper subscription via Library)
Screen

**Library resources:**

Art and Architecture Source
Artstor
Box of Broadcasts
FIAF International Index to Film Periodicals.
Film Index International
Performing Arts Periodicals Database
Journal of Media Practice
JSTOR
Kanopy
Lynda.com
New Cinemas
Newsstand
Project Muse
Sight and Sound – via Performing Arts Periodicals Database
Shots

**Web resources:**

Animation Studies Online Journal - http://journal.animationstudies.org/