

Course Specification

Course Summary Information		
1	Course Title	BA (Hons) Digital Animation with Foundation Year
2	Course Code	US1191F
3	Awarding Institution	Birmingham City University
4	Teaching Institution(s) (if different from point 3)	Birmingham City University
5	Professional Statutory or Regulatory Body (PSRB) accreditation (if applicable)	N/A

6	Course Description
	<p>The Foundation Year</p> <p>This Foundation Year has been specifically designed to allow you to undertake an additional year of study to build stronger creative footings that ensure successful progression through your chosen degree.</p> <p>Working in a friendly, lively and energetic environment, you will be given the freedom to expand your knowledge of practical skills, creative exploration and conceptual thinking, underpinned by broad critical understanding, academic writing and emerging theoretical principles.</p> <p>Dedicated Foundation tutors will support you throughout the year and BA teaching staff will work closely with you to prepare you for progression.</p> <p>There will be a range of opportunities to work on collaborative and individual projects, aimed to build your social skills and identify your role as a developing practitioner.</p> <p>Throughout the year you will be challenged with projects that question your current creative experiences and explore a breadth of experimentation to broaden your technical and critical understanding.</p> <p>You will be encouraged to analyse methods and materials appropriate for creative development and to question your position in relation to historical, contemporary, and future world scenarios. Both practical and written research tasks will be supported by one-to-one tutorials and small discussion groups to help you constructively build academic and social confidence.</p> <p>The two first semester modules will form the building blocks for future work and will explore core principles of creative practice focussing on the development of technical confidence, study skills and productivity.</p> <p>The two final semester modules will encourage a positive integration between research and practice, challenging decision making and technical competency.</p> <p>This semester is designed to empower you with independent learning skills appropriate for your future BA studies.</p> <p>On successful completion of the Foundation Year, you will have the flexibility to change direction and switch courses onto a related undergraduate degree.</p>

In order to progress onto your BA Programme, you must successfully pass all four core modules (totalling 120 credits).

BA (Hons) Digital Animation

This cutting-edge BA programme will develop your skills across the Digital Animation practice conventions. You will be taught by established practitioners, who will provide their knowledge on 2D and 3D animation disciplines.

The course is designed to develop graduates with knowledge of the theory, practice and industry trends that will enable them to succeed in a rapidly changing industry environment.

What's covered in the course?

The course will help you establish the core art fundamentals such as anatomy, gesture, pose, weight distribution, perspective, composition and an understanding of how they underpin digital animation practice. It also outlines the 12 principles of animation required to create engaging animation performance, whether you choose a Film/Television or Games/Interactive pathway. The course will also introduce you to industry standard project management and pipelines methodologies that mirror industry production procedures.

Depending on the route you choose to take on the course (Film/TV or Game/Interactive), you will produce a range of assessed material including but not exclusive to

- Storyboards & Story-reels
- Animation foundation exercises
- Performance animations
- Specialist portfolios and showreels
- Short films, made collaboratively, demonstrating animation principles and pipelines
- Game animation sets, demonstrated within the Unity and Unreal game engines

A key focus of this course is developing performance within character animation. You will develop acting techniques that will promote the development on your inner actor to project performance through your characters. You will also develop an understating of and demonstrate visual storytelling, with 'show don't tell' philosophies.

While theoretical and practice-based considerations of animation techniques and principles remain a central focus to the award, the course also provides shared modules within the faculty's film and games courses, offering wider collaborative opportunities which help provide core skills relevant to industry.

How you will learn

You will be taught in a range of lectures, seminars, practical workshops and production focused sessions, with regular individual and group reviews and tutorials.

There will also be regular (each semester) contact with our industry partners who will review your work and development.

	<p>Everyone who experiences this course will have the opportunity to work within a multi-disciplinary team to create the highest quality work and portfolios that are required to enter specialist positions within Animation industry pipelines.</p> <p>Professional Placement Year</p> <p>Students joining BA (Hons) Digital Animation or BA (Hons) Digital Animation with Foundation Year will have the opportunity to do a year-long Professional Placement. They can apply directly to this as a course route, or they can opt in/ out by May of the previous year. The University wide professional placement year has been developed in recognition that extended working within the industry/ sector has benefits to both employers and students. The Professional Placement is 40-weeks long and takes place between level 5 and 6. Student must have passed 120 L4 and 120 L5 credits before the placement begins and are responsible for sourcing their placement (which can be paid or unpaid), the course and Careers+ teams will assist and offer students support in sourcing placement. The Professional Placement is awarded a pass/fail mark only.</p>
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7	Course Awards		
7a	Name of Final Award	Level	Credits Awarded
	Bachelor of Arts with Honours Digital Animation with Foundation Year	<i>Level 6</i>	<i>480 credits</i>
7b	Exit Awards and Credits Awarded		
	Foundation Certificate Visual Arts and Communication	<i>Level 3</i>	<i>120</i>
	Certificate of Higher Education Digital Animation	<i>Level 4</i>	<i>240</i>
	Diploma of Higher Education Digital Animation	<i>Level 5</i>	<i>360</i>
	Bachelor of Arts	<i>Level 6</i>	<i>420</i>

8	Derogation from the University Regulations		
	N/A		

9	Delivery Patterns		
	Mode(s) of Study	Location(s) of Study	Duration of Study
	Full Time with Foundation Year	Margaret Street and City Centre (Curzon building)	4 years
			Code(s)
			US1191F

10	Entry Requirements	
	Home:	The admission requirements for this course are stated on the course page of the BCU website at https://www.bcu.ac.uk/ , or may be found by searching for the course entry profile located on the UCAS website.

11	Course Aims
	<p><i>The aims of the course are to:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide a challenging and stimulating curriculum that combines methodology, research, technology, and production to support the professional development of a digital animation specialist • To inculcate high standards of production through the acquisition of industry standard technical skills • Enable students to work independently and collaboratively, developing the skills for effective individual practice, group working and interdisciplinary team working • Enable students to be analytical and critically engaged in practical and contextual enquiry • Encourage students to be imaginative, experimental, and responsive to ideas and innovation • Facilitate links to industry partners, providing a professional context for the production and reception of digital animation and opportunities for research, placements, study and succession. • Develop key communication, presentation, and professional skills appropriate to graduate level employment or progression to further study

12	Course Learning Outcomes
	<i>On completion of the course, students will be able to:</i>
Knowledge and understanding	
1	Employ appropriate methodology in the production and reception of digital animation
2	Critically evaluate the history, theory and context of contemporary digital animation, set in relation to visual arts, film and digital art
3	Apply appropriate professional production tools for the ideation, realisation, resolution and presentation of work
4	Engage with a network of relevant professional agencies and communities of practice
5	Apply interdisciplinary approaches to a creative digital animation practice
6	Position yourself as a professional within the creative industries
Skills and Attributes	
7	Display technical competency in the use of a range of 2D and 3D digital art, and animation production tools
8	Explore and develop character performance in relation to animation sequencing
9	Be organised and able to plan and manage resources, time and activities effectively
10	Be speculative, open, responsive, and flexible to creative possibility and change, demonstrating a commitment to the subject

13	Work collaboratively as part of an effective team, including confidence, critical self-awareness, listening, teamwork, decision making, negotiation and evaluation
14	Communicate verbally and visually, and present complex ideas clearly and succinctly, to both specialist and non-specialist audiences.

13	Level Learning Outcomes
	<i>Upon completion of Level 3 / the Certificate of Higher Education, students will be able to:</i>
	Knowledge and understanding
1	Creatively compile written and visual analysis exploring layout and documentation strategies.
2	Integrate appropriate research that supports the development of practice-based work.
3	Apply engaged learning to facilitate creativity in response to a structured brief.
4	Construct a presentation that demonstrates the development of a personal visual language.
	Skills and Attributes
5	Evidence a breadth of experimentation to develop skills and techniques that impact on the development of practice-based work.
6	Generate visual solutions that evidence the development of ideas, media experimentation and techniques.
7	Show a developing ability to select work that evidences a range of experimental and creative solutions.
8	Evidence a broad knowledge of your chosen subject area.
	<i>Upon completion of Level 4 / the Certificate of Higher Education, students will be able to:</i>
	Knowledge and understanding
1	Form an understanding of the relationship between visual art, animation, and film with digital mediums
2	Use research methods to gather and distil material relevant for the development of ideas and relate them to historical and contemporary contexts
3	Apply the basic principles of 2D and 3D animation production to practical work
4	Reflect on developing ideas and make appropriate technical and conceptual adaptations to emerging work
5	Engage in critical discussion and communicate in verbal, visual, and written form
	Skills and Attributes
6	Acquire basic technical skills in 2D and 3D animation production tools and processes
7	Visualise and animate ideas as a form of communication, articulation, and expression
8	Critique own work and the work of others, identifying intention, strengths, and weaknesses.
9	Collaborate on group work employing key interpersonal and communication skills

10	Plan practical activity using pipelines and asset organisation
	<i>Upon completion of Level 5 / the Diploma of Higher Education, students will be able to:</i>
	Knowledge and understanding
1	Apply further theories, principles, and concepts to the practical development of digital animation
2	Develop the use of character and performance to articulate and communicate visual ideas
3	Conceptually analyse a range of approach and practice to inform and substantiate ideas and solutions
4	Work strategically and effectively in interdisciplinary and collaborative teams
	Skills and Attributes
5	Research, analyse and interpret context and methodologies, and apply findings to further develop imaginative approaches to an animation practice
6	Organise and establish self-directed study and group activity, managing timelines and resourcing
7	Work collaboratively as part of a team, developing confidence, critical self-awareness, listening, teamwork, decision-making, negotiation, and evaluation
8	Communicate effectively, and present further developed ideas
	<i>Upon completion of 60 credits at Level 6 / the Bachelors Degree, students will be able to:</i>
	Knowledge and understanding
1	Effectively demonstrate professional animation production principles and values
2	Critically evaluate and discuss the appropriateness of different methodologies and approaches
3	Demonstrate a depth of understanding of a professional animation practice
	Skills and Attributes
4	Employ a high level of competency in the use of digital art and digital animation tools
5	Be flexible, resourceful, and resilient, and adapt a problem-solving mindset to fit changing or unforeseen circumstances
6	Communicate verbally and visually and present complex ideas clearly and succinctly to both specialist and non-specialist audiences
7	Construct complex problem-solving skills and processes using research, experimentation, and reflection to identify relevant opportunities, purposes, and solutions

14	Course Learning, Teaching and Assessment Strategy
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Teaching and Learning Strategies

The BA (Hons) Digital Animation course teaching and learning strategy is informed by its 3-pillar structure. Pillar 1, The teaching of core art, animation, and acting principles. Pillar 2, the teaching of industry standard software and Pillar 3, the teaching of production management and pipeline processes. The course is underpinned by the Learning, Teaching and Assessment Strategy which sets out the principle and approach in which learning, and teaching is enhanced. We have a commitment to continually develop educational approaches that support and promote diverse learning styles, inclusivity in its subjects and encourages lifelong learning for a diverse student community, with one eye always on what the entertainment industry requires from our course, to provide industry ready graduates.

Birmingham is a city of a thousand trades and the BA (Hons) Digital Animation course celebrates and embeds within this history as the city now embraces and develops its cutting edge digital future. The BA (Hons) Digital Animation course teaching focuses on a blend of theoretical principles, practical skills training, and collaborative projects, within our dedicated computer labs. We aim to mirror industry approaches, processes and methodologies and this underpins our philosophy of learn by doing.

Alongside core teaching, the course also promotes the development of networks within the local, national and international animation industry that aligns to the development of their portfolios and showreels to gain employment within these industries, as well as developing collaborative opportunities within these networks.

The BA (Hons) Digital Animation course supports our students by providing a schedule of taught sessions covering topics, skills, challenges, and regular tutorials. Tutorials exist to review student work, provide feedback on what has been produced so far and offer advice (feed-forward) detailing what the students should do next to improve their work and professional practice. During the collaborative production modules these tutorials may take the form of a team milestone reviews where the whole project is evaluated for feedback and feedforward.

The course is delivered through the integration of theory and practice. Scaffolded learning of practical and critical skills is incorporated at all levels and to ensure the progression of learning supported by transition activities (from level 4, to 5 to 6). All staff on the BA (Hons) Digital Animation are active practitioners who, through their own professional and academic practices enact the principle of practice-led teaching and learning.

Students are always encouraged to become aware of ethical and inclusive practices and how this may shape their contributions to the creative and cultural sectors in the region, and beyond.

The BA (Hons) Digital Animation course delivers an intellectually stimulating curriculum that emphasises skills and processes that are embedded within the Internationally Animation industry. An extensive range of taught and independent learning activities tailored to individuals' particular learning objectives support the successful outcomes of students to enable personal transformation through a structure that supports different learning styles. Methods of teaching and learning, include:

- Workshop skills sessions
- Studio production skills sessions
- Supported studio production sessions
- Pastoral Tutorials

- Group Tutorials / Critical reviews
- Lectures
- Seminars
- Reading groups
- Academic Skills Sessions
- Presentations
- Work in Progress screenings
- External facing/ live projects
- Visits/ Trips
- E-learning
- Graduate plus activities
- Self-directed study (including computer lab, workshop, library access)

Range of Assessments

The assessments are how students will experience the course content. There will be a range of different assessments which are tied to the philosophy of the course, the learning outcomes of the module and the content taught. This may include but is not limited to

- Animation sequences (exercises, line tests, cycles, sets and shorts)
- Story Sequences (focus on sequential planning and staging)
- Block & Pre Vis sequences (prep for final animation)
- 2D & 3D animated character performance (anim levels 1 to 3)
- Dailies screenings (to mirror industry reviews within productions)
- Individual and Groups in-person portfolio presentations
- Individual and Groups in-person critical reflective presentations

Students receive the assessment brief at the start of every module, taught sessions will provide required material to complete the assignment and scheduled tutorials/reviews will help monitor progress and provide support. Formative/interim assessment opportunities are also made available within each module.

A key principle the course team instil in students is “We don’t want the first time we see your work to be when you hand it in.” Formative assessment opportunities are scheduled within modules, these may take the form of a screening, presentation, a demonstration, a sequence review, or compulsory tutorial, they are there to ensure students have the appropriate support structure in place for personal development and academic achievement. Students are expected to come prepared with work ready for these formative learning opportunities. If students don’t do this, they miss the opportunity to work in partnership with the course team.

Feedback will take the form of verbal direction and advice during tutorials and written feedback at key points during the module. Formal written feedback will be provided with each grade received detailing successes and areas for the student to improve upon throughout their studies or once they have left the course.

The BA (Hons) Digital Animation course uses both formative and summative feedback, with an understanding that both forms of assessment play a key role in informing ongoing learning. These forms of feedback are central to the studio learning experience in digital art and animation practice, which promotes students becoming active participants in their own development. Mid-module formative and end of module summative assessments use a feed forwards philosophy;

Students are also encouraged to review their own and each other's work and to engage in a dialogue on how to improve work moving forward. Level 4 has a focus on providing opportunities for students to engage in effective peer assessment activities as a mechanism to support their transition into independent learning and to support the exchange of knowledge, skills and understanding.

Feedback mechanisms within the course include:

- Formative assessment points
- One-on-one formative tutorials
- Group critiques and production reviews
- Peer-review
- Summative assessment feed-forward
- Written feedback

Forms of submission include:

- Skills Portfolios
- Portfolios of individual practice (Observational drawing, Life drawing, Anatomy, Gesture, Actioning, Value, Form, Perspective, Composition, Colour theory, Performance line tests, Layout, blocking, character performance animation, etc).
- Portfolios of collaborative practice (Project management, pipeline design, Script breakdowns, Storyboards, Layout, Blocking, Animation line tests, play-blasts, animation sequencing, performance projection, model-making, rigging, lighting & rendering, Compositing, Short films, etc).
- Critical Evaluations and Reflection
- Video Journals
- Screenings
- Live and recorded verbal and visual presentations
- Blogs/ vlogs
- Showreels
- Websites

15	Course Requirements																																														
15a	<p>Level 3:</p> <p><i>In order to complete this course a student must successfully complete all the following CORE modules (totalling 120 credits):</i></p> <table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th>Module Code</th> <th>Module Name</th> <th>Credit Value</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>VIS3004</td> <td>Understanding Practice</td> <td>20</td> </tr> <tr> <td>VIS3001</td> <td>Creative Development & Production</td> <td>40</td> </tr> <tr> <td>VIS3002</td> <td>Perspectives on Practice</td> <td>20</td> </tr> <tr> <td>VIS3003</td> <td>Creative Realisation</td> <td>40</td> </tr> </tbody> </table> <p>Level 4</p> <p><i>In order to complete this course a student must successfully complete the following core modules (totalling 120 credits)</i></p> <table border="1"> <tbody> <tr> <td>MED4145</td> <td>Art Theory and Practice (shared)</td> <td>20 credits</td> </tr> <tr> <td>GFA4001</td> <td>Film Primer</td> <td>20 credits</td> </tr> <tr> <td>GFA4003</td> <td>2D Animation Principles & Production</td> <td>20 credits</td> </tr> <tr> <td>MED4144</td> <td>3D Modelling Theory & Practice (shared)</td> <td>20 credits</td> </tr> <tr> <td>GFA4004</td> <td>3D Animation Production</td> <td>40 credits</td> </tr> </tbody> </table> <p>Level 5</p> <p><i>In order to complete this course a student must successfully complete the following core modules (totalling 100 credits):</i></p> <table border="1"> <tbody> <tr> <td>GFA5010</td> <td>Character Concept</td> <td>20 credits</td> </tr> <tr> <td>MED5198</td> <td>Character Production (shared)</td> <td>40 credits</td> </tr> <tr> <td>GFA5011</td> <td>Performance Practice</td> <td>40 credits</td> </tr> </tbody> </table> <p><i>In order to complete this course a student must successfully complete at least 20 credits from the following indicative list of OPTIONAL modules:</i></p> <table border="1"> <tbody> <tr> <td>ADM5006</td> <td>Collaborative Practice (optional)</td> <td rowspan="3">20 credits</td> </tr> <tr> <td>ADM5000</td> <td>Work Placement (optional)</td> </tr> <tr> <td>ADM5001</td> <td>Live Project (optional)</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	Module Code	Module Name	Credit Value	VIS3004	Understanding Practice	20	VIS3001	Creative Development & Production	40	VIS3002	Perspectives on Practice	20	VIS3003	Creative Realisation	40	MED4145	Art Theory and Practice (shared)	20 credits	GFA4001	Film Primer	20 credits	GFA4003	2D Animation Principles & Production	20 credits	MED4144	3D Modelling Theory & Practice (shared)	20 credits	GFA4004	3D Animation Production	40 credits	GFA5010	Character Concept	20 credits	MED5198	Character Production (shared)	40 credits	GFA5011	Performance Practice	40 credits	ADM5006	Collaborative Practice (optional)	20 credits	ADM5000	Work Placement (optional)	ADM5001	Live Project (optional)
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Level 6

In order to complete this course a student must successfully complete the following core modules (totalling 120 credits)

MED6187	Animation Pipelines	20 credits
MED6200	Professional Practice	40 credits
ADM6006	Final Major Project	60 credits

15b Structure Diagram

Please note list of optional modules is indicative only. Students' choice will not be guaranteed for optional modules but a fair and transparent process will be adopted and shared with students.

Level 3

Semester 1	Semester 2
M1 Understanding Practice (20 credit)	M3 Perspectives on Practice (20 credit)
M2 Understanding Practice (40 credit)	M4 Creative Realisation (40 credit)

Level 4

Semester 1	Semester 2
M1 Art Theory & Practice (20 credit) (Core)	M4 3D Modelling & Practice (20 credit) (Core)
M2 Film Primer (20 credit) (Core)	M5 3D Animation Production (40 credit) (Core)
M3 2D Animation Principles & Production (20 credit) (Core)	

Level 5

Semester 1	Semester 2
M6 Character Concept (20 credit) (Core)	Optional M8 Collaborative Practice (20 credit) (Core) ADM5000 Work Placement (20 credits) ADM5001 Live Project (20 credits)
M7 3D Character Production (40 credit) (Core)	M9 Performance Practice (40 credit) (Core)

Professional Placement Year (optional)

Optional Professional Placement Year (120 credits)
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Level 6

Semester 1	Semester 2
M10 Animation Pipelines (20 credit) (Core)	M12 Final Major Project (60 credit) (Core)
M11 Professional Practice (40 credit) (Core)	

16 Overall Student Workload and Balance of Assessment

Overall student *workload* consists of class contact hours, independent learning and assessment activity, with each credit taken equating to a total study time of around 10 hours. While actual contact hours may depend on the optional modules selected, the following information gives an indication of how much time students will need to allocate to different activities at each level of the course.

- *Scheduled Learning* includes lectures, practical classes and workshops, contact time specified in timetable
- *Directed Learning* includes placements, work-based learning, external visits, on-line activity, Graduate+, peer learning
- *Private Study* includes preparation for exams

The *balance of assessment* by mode of assessment (e.g. coursework, exam and in-person) depends to some extent on the optional modules chosen by students. The approximate percentage of the course assessed by coursework, exam and in-person is shown below.

Workload

40% time spent in timetabled teaching and learning activity

Activity	Number of Hours
Scheduled Learning	480
Directed Learning	480
Private Study	240
Total Hours	1200

Balance of Assessment

Assessment Mode	Percentage
Coursework	100%
Exam	
In-Person	

Level 4

Workload

23% time spent in timetabled teaching and learning activity

Activity	Number of Hours
Scheduled Learning	274
Directed Learning	768
Private Study	200
Total Hours	1200

Balance of Assessment

Assessment Mode	Percentage
Coursework	100%
Exam	

In-Person	
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Level 5

Workload

22% time spent in timetabled teaching and learning activity

Activity	Number of Hours
Scheduled Learning	246-266
Directed Learning	680
Private Study	240
Total Hours	1200

Balance of Assessment

Assessment Mode	Percentage
Coursework	100%
Exam	
In-Person	

Level 6

Workload

22% time spent in timetabled teaching and learning activity

Activity	Number of Hours
Scheduled Learning	260
Directed Learning	700
Private Study	240
Total Hours	1200

Balance of Assessment

Assessment Mode	Percentage
Coursework	100%
Exam	
In-Person	