

## Course Specification

Course Summary Information		
1	<b>Course Title</b>	BA (Hons) Visual Effects
2	<b>Course Code</b>	US1517
3	<b>Awarding Institution</b>	Birmingham City University
4	<b>Teaching Institution(s)</b> (if different from point 3)	
5	<b>Professional Statutory or Regulatory Body (PSRB) accreditation</b> (if applicable)	

6	Course Description
	<p>So, you want to work in the Film or Games industry? Do you imagine yourself as a creative artist or a technical director? Our BA (Hons) degree in Visual Effects is where creativity meets technology (STEAM). It will give you the skills to unleash your true mix of creative and technical abilities. You could go on to work on top level productions for a range of industries, including TV, film, games, advertising, architecture, education and more.</p> <p>Visual Effects is an ever expanding multi-billion-pound industry in the UK and globally, with job opportunities in high demand. As demand grows for visual effects in Film, TV and Games, the demand also grows for skilled professionals who can bring these to life.</p> <p>On this course, you will develop technical, creative and production skills to prepare you for a range of careers. You will learn a variety of disciplines from modelling, rigging, animation, dynamics to lighting, rendering and compositing, there is so much for you to explore. You will learn using state-of-the-art facilities and software including a Vicon Motion Capture studio, high-specification computers, industry standard software such as Maya, Nuke and Houdini and one of the largest fixed green screen studios in the UK.</p> <p>You will have a plenty of opportunities to work interdisciplinary and collaboratively throughout the course, this will allow you to understand the collaborative nature of these industries you hope to work within. Modules such as 'Industry Project', 'Collaborative Practice' or 'Virtual Production' as some examples all allow you to develop those professional and collaborative skills that are required to become a Visual Effects Practitioner.</p> <p>You will be taught by a range of experienced staff, with a breadth of knowledge across both visual effects and the larger area of computer graphics. This includes staff with industry experience, and staff who work and innovate alongside industry in a variety of ways.</p> <p><b>What's covered in the course?</b></p> <p>This course has been developed alongside the visual effects industry to meet the needs of employers, so that you leave with the skills needed to secure a great career.</p> <p>You will learn all aspects of visual effects production including shooting video, computer modelling, animation, matchmoving, motion capture and compositing. You will use these skills to produce digital elements such as creatures and environments, then combine them with live action video to produce convincing visual effects shots. Along with the visual elements you</p>

	<p>produce, you will develop problem solving and critical thinking skills while building your unique fusion of creative and technical abilities that are desired by industry.</p> <p>On the BA (Hons Visual Effects course you will learn technical and creative skills underpinned by knowledge of fundamental concepts while using industry tools and best practice.</p> <p>During the course, you will do a mixture of ‘hands on’ productions and technical investigations, which will teach you the practice, process, craft and technology of visual effects. These activities will help you become a proactive learner able to explore knowledge, implement best practice and critically evaluate the results of your work.</p> <p>Aligning with the industry practice of collaboration, you will get the opportunity to work with students from related disciplines such as animation, games and film. This will allow you to broaden your horizons and help you understand how your visual effects and computer graphics skills can fit into other existing and emerging industries.</p>
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<b>7</b>	<b>Course Awards</b>		
<b>7a</b>	<b>Name of Final Award</b>	<b>Level</b>	<b>Credits Awarded</b>
	Bachelor of Arts with Honours Visual Effects	6	360
	Bachelor of Arts with Honours Visual Effects with Professional Placement Year	6	480
<b>7b</b>	<b>Exit Awards and Credits Awarded</b>		
	Certificate of Higher Education Visual Effects	4	120
	Diploma of Higher Education Visual Effects	5	240
	Bachelor of Arts Visual Effects	6	300

<b>8</b>	<b>Variation from the University Regulations</b>		
	N/A		

<b>9</b>	<b>Delivery Patterns</b>		
	<b>Mode(s) of Study</b>	<b>Location(s) of Study</b>	<b>Duration of Study</b>
	Full Time	City Centre	3 years
	with Professional Placement Year	City Centre	4 years
			<b>Code(s)</b>
			US1517
			US1518

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

<b>11</b>	<b>Course Aims</b>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• To provide students with a comprehensive understanding of visual effects, blending a mix of art principles with cutting-edge digital tools and techniques.</li> <li>• To equip students with the practical and theoretical knowledge and skills that are required to succeed within the film, games and animation industries with a focus on technical artistry.</li> <li>• To foster full developed understanding of collaborative and interdisciplinary working and communication.</li> <li>• To develop critical thinking and problem-solving skills allowing students to solve complex artistic and technical challenges for visual effects work.</li> <li>• To prepare students for the ever-changing demands of the visual effects industry, ensuring they remain proactive, adaptable and professional.</li> <li>• To create a full portfolio of work that demonstrates a high level of skill and creativity, enhancing employability and industry readiness.</li> </ul>

<b>12</b>	<b>Course Learning Outcomes</b>
<b>Knowledge and Understanding</b>	
<b>1</b>	Articulate visually your in-depth knowledge and understanding of visual effects including the integration of art and technology.
<b>2</b>	Apply appropriate professional production tools for the ideation, realisation, resolution and presentation of work.
<b>3</b>	Illustrate the pipeline and workflow processes in visual effects from an art and technical perspective.
<b>4</b>	Apply interdisciplinary approaches to visual effects practice.
<b>5</b>	Position yourself as a professional within the creative industries.
<b>Skills and Other Attributes</b>	
<b>1</b>	Demonstrate proficiency in using industry-standard software and tools and utilising a fusion of creative and technical skills to produce visual effects assets
<b>2</b>	Design and implement bespoke approaches and solutions, to producing visual effect work.
<b>3</b>	Be organised and able to plan and manage resources, time and activities effectively
<b>4</b>	Critically evaluate and reflect on your own work and the methods used
<b>5</b>	Communicate verbally and visually, and present complex ideas clearly and succinctly, to both specialist and non-specialist audiences
<b>6</b>	Work collaboratively as part of an effective team, including confidence, critical self-awareness, listening, teamwork, decision making, negotiation and evaluation

<b>13</b>	<b>Level Learning Outcomes</b>
	<b><i>Upon completion of Level 4 / the Certificate of Higher Education, students will be able to:</i></b>
	<b>Knowledge and understanding</b>
1	Describe the relationship between visual art, animation, and film with digital mediums
2	Use research methods to gather and material relevant for the development of ideas and relate them to visual effects contexts
3	Apply the basic principles of visual effects production to practical work
4	Reflect on developing ideas and make appropriate technical and conceptual adaptations to emerging work
5	Critically reflect and communicate in verbal, visual, or written form
	<b>Skills and Attributes</b>
6	Acquire basic technical skills in visual effects production tools and processes
7	Visualise ideas as a form of communication and articulation
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
	<b><i>Upon completion of Level 5 / the Diploma of Higher Education, students will be able to:</i></b>
	<b>Knowledge and understanding</b>
1	Apply further theories, principles, and concepts to the practical development of visual effects
2	Illustrate the use of visual effects 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
	<b>Skills and Attributes</b>
5	Research, analyse and interpret context and methodologies, and apply findings to further develop imaginative approaches to visual effects 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
	<b><i>Upon completion of 60 credits at Level 6 / the Bachelors Degree, students will be able to:</i></b>
	<b>Knowledge and understanding</b>

1	Effectively demonstrate professional visual effects 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 visual effects practice
	<b>Skills and Attributes</b>
4	Employ a high level of competency in the use of digital art and visual effects 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

<b>14</b>	<b>Course Learning, Teaching and Assessment Strategy</b>
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**Teaching and Learning Strategies**

The learning and teaching strategy for the BA (Hons) Visual Effects course is designed to provide a balanced mix of lectures, practical sessions and collaborations, emphasising the application of theory to real-world practicalities. The course is built on three pillars. Pillar 1, the core skills of a visual effects artist. Pillar 2, the teaching of industry standard software. Pillar 3, the teaching of production management and pipeline processes. The teaching approach on the course evolves from initial structured, guided learning to the students becoming more independent, research-oriented learners, reflecting a decrease in scheduled teaching and an increase in directed and private study. This progression is intentional and aims to develop the student's ability to work independently and apply their knowledge and skills in complex scenarios, aligning with the expectations of a progressively independent learner. We aim to mirror industry approaches, processes and methodologies and this underpins the course philosophy of learning by doing. The teaching methods are chosen to reflect the dynamic and ever-changing nature of the visual effects industry across, film, games and animation sectors, ensuring that students are well-prepared for a variety of roles and challenges that they may face in their careers.

Alongside the core teaching, the course also promotes the development of networks within the local, national and international visual effects, film, games and animation industries. This 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) Visual Effects course delivers a compelling curriculum that emphasises the skills and processes that are embedded within the industries of film, games and animation. Methods of teaching and learning include:

- Lectures and seminars – provide theoretical foundations, introduce concepts and facilitate discussions and critical analysis.
- Workshops, practical sessions and lab work – offer hands-on experience with software, software tools, technologies and skills.
- Group projects and collaborations – offer interdisciplinary approaches, the exchange of ideas and perspectives and foster teamworking which is vital to the industry.
- Guest lectures and industry involvement – offers insights into the industries trends, pipelines and practices, facilitates engagement with professionals and industry experts.
- Self-directed learning – encourages independent research and exploration along with reflective practice.

**Range of Assessments**

The assessments are how the students will experience the course content. There will be a diverse variety of different assessments which are tied into the course philosophy, the learning outcomes and the content taught.

This may include but is not limited to:

- Individual coursework
- Group projects / collaborations
- Presentations / VIVAs
- Reflective pieces and portfolios

These are all designed to comprehensively evaluate the students' knowledge and skills. We offer a balanced spread throughout the academic year to avoid overwhelming students. Formative assessments, such as peer reviews, ongoing monitoring provide ongoing feedback, fostering a deeper understanding and improvement.

A key principle the course team instil in students is "We want to see your work in progress regularly before you hand it in." Formative assessment opportunities are scheduled into the modules to ensure that 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 do not do this, they miss the opportunity to work in partnership with the course team.

The BA (Hons) Visual Effects 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 essential to the studio learning experience which promotes students to become active participants in their own development.

Feedback mechanisms within the course include:

- Formative assessment points
- One-on-one formative tutorials
- Peer-review
- Summative assessment feed-forward
- Written (and/or Audio/Video) feedback

Expectations from the students:

- Active participation in all learning activities
- Engagement with peer feedback and collaborative projects
- Self-directed research and exploration to complement structured learning
- Commitment to continuous improvement and receptiveness to feedback

15	Course Requirements																																																												
12a	<p><b>Level 4:</b></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 style="background-color: #ffff00;">Module Code</th> <th style="background-color: #ffff00;">Module Name</th> <th style="background-color: #ffff00;">Credit Value</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>CMP4307</td> <td>Modelling</td> <td>20</td> </tr> <tr> <td>GFA4001</td> <td>Film Primer</td> <td>20</td> </tr> <tr> <td>DIG4171</td> <td>Matchmoving</td> <td>20</td> </tr> <tr> <td>DIG4174</td> <td>Texture and Look Development</td> <td>20</td> </tr> <tr> <td>GFA4004</td> <td>3D Animation Production</td> <td>40</td> </tr> </tbody> </table> <p><b>Level 5:</b></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 style="background-color: #ffff00;">Module Code</th> <th style="background-color: #ffff00;">Module Name</th> <th style="background-color: #ffff00;">Credit Value</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>CMP5380</td> <td>Procedural Modelling</td> <td>20</td> </tr> <tr> <td>MED5198</td> <td>3D Character Production</td> <td>40</td> </tr> <tr> <td>DIG5132</td> <td>Compositing</td> <td>20</td> </tr> <tr> <td>DIG5133</td> <td>Dynamic Effects and Simulations</td> <td>20</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"> <thead> <tr> <th style="background-color: #ffff00;">Module Code</th> <th style="background-color: #ffff00;">Module Name</th> <th style="background-color: #ffff00;">Credit Value</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>CMP5373</td> <td>Collaborative Practice (optional)</td> <td>20</td> </tr> <tr> <td>ADM5000</td> <td>Work Placement (optional)</td> <td>20</td> </tr> <tr> <td>ADM5XXX</td> <td>Independent Creative Entrepreneur</td> <td>20</td> </tr> <tr> <td>ADM5XXX</td> <td>Industry Project</td> <td>20</td> </tr> </tbody> </table> <p><b>Professional Placement Year (optional)</b></p> <p><i>In order to qualify for the award of Bachelor of Science with Honours Visual Effects with Professional Placement Year, a student must successfully complete all of the Level 6 modules listed below as well as the following Level 5 module:</i></p> <table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th style="background-color: #ffff00;">Module Code</th> <th style="background-color: #ffff00;">Module Name</th> <th style="background-color: #ffff00;">Credit Value</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>PPY5004</td> <td>Professional Placement</td> <td>120</td> </tr> </tbody> </table> <p><b>Level 6:</b></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 style="background-color: #ffff00;">Module Code</th> <th style="background-color: #ffff00;">Module Name</th> <th style="background-color: #ffff00;">Credit Value</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>CMP6XXX</td> <td>Virtual Production</td> <td>20</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	Module Code	Module Name	Credit Value	CMP4307	Modelling	20	GFA4001	Film Primer	20	DIG4171	Matchmoving	20	DIG4174	Texture and Look Development	20	GFA4004	3D Animation Production	40	Module Code	Module Name	Credit Value	CMP5380	Procedural Modelling	20	MED5198	3D Character Production	40	DIG5132	Compositing	20	DIG5133	Dynamic Effects and Simulations	20	Module Code	Module Name	Credit Value	CMP5373	Collaborative Practice (optional)	20	ADM5000	Work Placement (optional)	20	ADM5XXX	Independent Creative Entrepreneur	20	ADM5XXX	Industry Project	20	Module Code	Module Name	Credit Value	PPY5004	Professional Placement	120	Module Code	Module Name	Credit Value	CMP6XXX	Virtual Production	20
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MED6200	Professional Practice	40
GFA6015	Major Project	60

**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 4**

Semester 1	Semester 2
<b>M1   Matchmoving</b> (20 credit) (Core)	<b>M4   Texture and Look Development</b> (20 credit) (Core)
<b>M2   Film Primer</b> (20 credit) (Core)	<b>M5   3D Animation Production</b> (40 credit) (Core)
<b>M3   Modelling</b> (20 credit) (Core)	

**Level 5**

Semester 1	Semester 2
<b>M6   Procedural Modelling</b> (20 credit) (Core)	Optional <b>M8   Collaborative Practice</b> (20 credit) <b>OR   Work Placement</b> (20 credits) <b>OR   Industry Project</b> (20 credits) <b>OR   Independent Creative Entrepreneur</b> (20 credits)
	<b>M9 Dynamic Effects and Simulations</b> (20 credit) (Core)
<b>M7   3D Character Production</b> (40 credit) (Core)	<b>M9   Compositing</b> (20 credit) (Core)

**Professional Placement Year (optional)**

<b>Optional   Professional Placement Year</b> (120 credits)
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**Level 6**

Semester 1	Semester 2
<b>M10   Virtual Production</b> (20 credit) (Core)	<b>M12   Major Project</b> (60 credit) (Core)
<b>M11   Professional Practice</b> (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.

### Level 4

#### Workload

#### 22% time spent in timetabled teaching and learning activity

Activity	Number of Hours
Scheduled Learning	258
Directed Learning	518
Private Study	424
<b>Total Hours</b>	<b>1200</b>

#### Balance of Assessment

Assessment Mode	Percentage
Coursework	90%
Exam	0%
In-Person	10%

### Level 5

#### Workload

#### 24% time spent in timetabled teaching and learning activity

Activity	Number of Hours
Scheduled Learning	284-294
Directed Learning	466-476
Private Study	440
<b>Total Hours</b>	<b>1200</b>

**Balance of Assessment**

<b>Assessment Mode</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
Coursework	72-83%
Exam	0%
In-Person	17-28%

**Level 6**
**Workload**

**18% time spent in timetabled teaching and learning activity**

<b>Activity</b>	<b>Number of Hours</b>
Scheduled Learning	134-208
Directed Learning	696-770
Private Study	296
<b>Total Hours</b>	1200

**Balance of Assessment**

<b>Assessment Mode</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
Coursework	92%
Exam	0%
In-Person	8%