Futureworks

University Education
for a Creative Career

IMPORTANT INFORMATION ABOUT YOUR COURSE

BA (HONS) ART OF VISUAL EFFECTS (VFX)

COURSE DESCRIPTION

Our Art of Visual Effects (VFX) degree is a practical skills-based course tailored directly to the needs of the visual effects, games, and other digital media industries. All our staff are active within the industry and teach you the skills that you'll need to gain employment after graduating. The course utilises a mix of lectures, hands-on workshops, tutorial classes, studio sessions and practical exercises such as 3D Modelling, Digital Sculpting, 2D & 3D Compositing, Motion Graphics, Motion Performance, Asset integration, Simulation, Dynamics & Technical FX and onset VFX supervision.

The course fuses cutting-edge industry-standard software skills with lessons learned from over a hundred years of filmmaking and visual effects. We teach everything from the ground up; in short, you do not have to have any prior knowledge or tradition artistic skill before joining the course. Our highly skilled team will support you in developing the knowledge and skills you need to thrive in industry.

WHY STUDY VISUAL EFFECTS AT FUTUREWORKS?

Whether your ambition is to apply visual effects to blockbuster films, commercials, TV shows, or industries like architecture, medicine, or automobiles, this program has been developed in collaboration with professional VFX artists to ensure its relevance and currency. We combine high quality teaching led by professionals who are active within industry with industry facing software and facilities to ensure that graduates are industry ready upon graduation.

We are an Epic Unreal partner institution and ensure that we provide a professional learning experience. You will develop your skills using professional, industry software such as Maya, Nuke, Unreal and Houdini in combination with industry facing facilities.

By enrolling, you will acquiring the technical and creative skills sought after by the industry. Additionally, you'll have the opportunity to develop your soft skills, build valuable industry connections, and graduate with an impressive showreel which will pave the way to a successful career.

ENTRY REQUIREMENTS

To be considered for this course, you will require 104-120 UCAS points. This could be gained via a number of qualifications, for example:

- BCC or above at A2 Level
- DMM or above at Extended Diploma Level
- M or above at UAL Level 3 Extended Diploma Level
- A proven interest in this area

If you're unsure how many points you have you can use the UCAS tariff calculator.

Remember that qualifications such as Graded Examinations in Music Performance and Arts Award (Gold) can also count towards your UCAS points – check the tariff calculator.

Applicants who do not have the required qualifications, but do have the industry experience and/or proven interest in the subject will also be considered.

All applicants are expected to have at least a grade 4 in GCSEs Maths and English Language. Non-UK applicants will need to have an English Language qualification at International Level B2 or higher, such as an IELTS of 6.0 or better (with no component below 5.5). Students with equivalent qualifications will also be accepted.

If you are from a country classified as English-Speaking by the UK government or have studied a degree or postgraduate diploma (taught in English) you may not be required to present other evidence of English language ability.

Applications from individuals with non-standard qualifications, relevant work or life experience will be equally considered.

If your application is successful, you will be invited to an interview. During this, you will have the opportunity to talk about your work, influences and interests. Ideal applicants will have a keen interest in visual effects, film, TV or digital media. You will not be asked to provide a portfolio of your work as part of the application process . However, if during your interview you would like to share with us examples of any work you may have produced, we would welcome any opportunity to gain insight into your interests.

MODULES (CREDITS)

YEAR 1

Compositing for VFX (20 credits)– Introduces you to working with industry standard software. You will be introduced to the core 2D compositing skill used by the leading production houses internationally.

Asset Integration & Invisible VFX (20 credits)– Building on the skills learnt in 'Composting for VFX', you will focus on how to track real world cameras, gather lighting information, texturing and multipass rendering to invisible composite 3D asset into a filmed plate.

3D for VFX (20 credits**)** – You will be introduced to the fundamentals of 3D modelling and Animation to enable you to replicate real world objects in industry standard 3D software. You will be introduced to creative and technical skills such as good edge workflow, UV mapping, texturing, lighting and rendering in order to create a 3D turntable artefact, which showcases the beginnings of Photorealism.

Creative Development (20 credits) – This module introduces you to key concepts for working in the creative sector, including the study of visual conventions and narratives, the development of traditional creative skills such as research skills, creative development, storyboard creation, previsualization and the analysis of visual material in terms of aesthetic value and communication content.

Creative Practice (40 credits) – This module builds on work produced as part of 'Creative Development', where you will work in small teams to develop concepts to particular briefs and then pitch these for feedback, before going on to develop the concept and deliver the final product as a post visual showcase. The aims are to provide you with the knowledge, understanding and practical skills in production for digital industries.

YEAR 2

Studio Project (40 credits)– Youwill be introduced to work as part of a team to replicate studios project pipeline for VFX. As part of an open brief, you will use creative practices to generate digital environments and environmental FX through the use of 3D modelling pipeline, virtual production with the Unreal Engine, dynamics, simulation and visual effects on set supervision.

Digital Sculpting (20 credits) – This will introduce you to advanced 3D modelling techniques including digital sculpting, hair simulation, texturing, rendering and compositing to creating a likeness of a character from popular media.

Motion Graphics (20 credits) – Youwill explore the theory, creative and practical development of graphic design in relation motion graphics and as part of user interface development for film, television, and advertising. This will include exploring key graphic design techniques, as well as animation principles, 3D, and simulation-based motion graphics.

Performance Capture (20 credits) – You will be introduced to motion performance-based animation and its integration with an animation ready digital character within a digital environment which takes in to consideration the mise en scene of your creative decisions.

Dynamics & Technical FX (20 credits) – Introduces you to the use particle systems, rigid body dynamics, cloth simulations, fluid simulations, and destruction simulations. This will include research of forces, collisions, friction, and material properties to create realistic-looking simulations. Furthermore, the you will employ evaluation and analysis of creative and technical decisions making.

YEAR 3

Professional Studio Project (40 credits) – Building on Film 'VFX studio Project' with a bias on specialisation you get the chance to negotiate your role in the assessment and are graded accordingly. This is where the you can hone your specific research and practical skills to create a group-focused portfolio.

Major Project (40 credits) – This is the module that allows you the freedom to create your own project relating to your chosen area of the industry. This can include collaboration or individual work and is another area where you can enhance your portfolio and employability skills.

Professional Futures (40 credits) – Prepares the you for the world of work in a multitude of ways from career research, networking, how to create a freelance portfolio to the techniques needed to become employable.

WHAT ARE CREDITS?

As a guide, 20 credits typically represents around 52 hours of tutor contact time (e.g. lectures/workshops/feedback) and 148 hours of self-study time (usually over the course of a semester). These numbers may increase or decrease depending on the nature, length and level of the module, especially towards the end of the course.

LOCATION OF DELIVERY

Your location of study will be at our Riverside Campus, which is located on New Bailey Street in Manchester. Teaching takes place in our fully equipped labs and studios. Flexible access to studio and practical facilities allow you to establish, practice and develop your work using professional-level hardware and software. Relevant hardware and software training will be provided during studio, workshop and lecture sessions to support work at all levels.

TEACHING STAFF

Everyone who teaches on this degree is active in the industry. Whether that's creating visual effects for film, TV or streaming media, illustrating, designing, visualisation or creating motion graphics; when your tutors aren't busy teaching you, they're busy honing their craft. As a result, we are always working and teaching the most current industry workflows. We practice what we teach. We also have an extensive network of industry contacts that we can draw on for guest lectures and workshops, industry-set briefs, and as guests for our degree shows.

METHOD OF ASSESSMENT

We don't believe in exams. All assessment takes the form of coursework, portfolios, presentations, and a limited number of essays. If you are being taught visual effects, you will submit a portfolio of industry facing work with a focus on quality over quantity. If you are being taught how to present your work or research, you will do a presentation your relevant to your project. In other words, all assessment is directly related to the skills being taught and directly applicable to life within industry. You will be offered feedback along the way, via formative submission points, with official summative submissions falling at the end of first and second semesters.

COURSE DETAILS

Award to be received on successful completion: BA (Hons) Art of Visual Effects (VFX)

Length of course: 3 YEARS (FULL TIME)

Regulator: Office for Students (OfS)

Awarding Institution: University of Lancashire

FEES / COSTS

Tuition Fees

Home Students: £9,535 per year

International Students: £17,000 per year

You may be eligible to apply for a student loan from Student Finance. Please see our Tuition Fees page for more information.

EQUIPMENT & ACTIVITIES

We provide PCs to work on onsite, with Cintiqs, Wacom tablets and filming equipment; all of which can be signed out from facilities. We have onsite licenses for all software taught on the programme.

You may find it beneficial to invest in additional equipment and/or study resources to support your learning. Example costs are:

- External Hard Drive (2tb SSD): £100
- Adobe Creative Suite license (for home use): £16.24 per month (with student discount)

Additionally, there may be the option of attending events outside of Futureworks which would further enhance your studies. Example costs are:

- Bolton Film Festival: £20-40, plus individual travel costs