

BA (HONS) ANIMATION & VISUAL EFFECTS (WITH INTEGRATED FOUNDATION YEAR)

Institute of Education, Arts and Society

Academic Level:	Level 6	Credits:	480
UCAS Code:	W615		
Awarding Body:	University of Cumbria		
Delivery Site:	Brampton Road		
Programme Length:	Standard registration period (full time) - 4 years		
Mode of Delivery:	Level 3 - Face to Face Level 4 - 6 - Blended		
Pattern of Delivery:	Full Time		
	Total weeks of study:	24	
	Delivery pattern:	2 x 15-week semesters comprised of 12 teaching weeks, 2x assessment weeks and 1x Enhancement Week	
	Standard semester dates:	Yes	
Programme Webpage:	https://www.cumbria.ac.uk/study/courses/undergraduate/animation-and-visual-effects/animation-and-visual-effects-ify/		

Entry Criteria

The University's standard criteria for admissions apply. Please refer to the [Applicant Information](#) pages of the University website for more information. For [RPL](#), please refer to the University website. Detailed criteria for admission to this programme can be found on the programme webpage.

PROGRAMME AIMS AND OUTCOMES

Programme Aims

This programme aims to provide a supportive transitional route into higher education.

By the end of this foundation year you will be able to:

1. Apply the academic skills essential for successful participation in undergraduate academic study
2. Demonstrate the ability to solve problems and study independently
3. Develop creative confidence and technical skills through practical exploration and expression
4. Develop critical reflection and self-directed learning skills to support informed creative decision-making.

By the end of the L4-6 programme you will be able to:

1. Provide a supportive transitional route into higher education equipping students with the skills essential for successful participation in academic study
2. Develop students' inter-disciplinary knowledge through an exploration of theoretical concepts in a range of contexts applicable to Media Arts
3. Develop the academic personal and professional skills required to work in the context of Media Arts
4. You will develop nascent interests, technical knowledge and skillset in animation and visual effects, to a level that is consistent with a graduate profile of an emerging professional in the creative industries, or that will facilitate postgraduate study
5. You will be a confident, flexible, resilient and adaptable creative practitioner who can work independently and collaboratively
6. You will develop an imaginative and problem-solving approach to working productively and inventively
7. You will have a portfolio demonstrating technical proficiency, specialism and skillset in animation and visual effects
8. You will have a knowledge and understanding of animation and visual effects history, and be able to critically and contextually research, analyse, synthesise and review its place in culture and society
9. You will have knowledge and understanding of current professional production practices and technologies, and a critical perspective that puts you in a position to shape the future of the creative industries
10. You will have experience in a range of industry focused, research informed creative projects
11. You will have developed a critical understanding of cultural diversity, inclusivity and accessibility within the creative industries and be able to apply this in your practice.

Programme Outcomes – Knowledge and Understanding

The programme provides opportunities for you to develop and demonstrate the following:

After 120 credits of study (FdCert) you will be able to demonstrate:

- FK1.** Understanding of basic creative processes, research methods, and safe technical practice
- FK2.** Recognition of how ideas connect to cultural and professional contexts
- FK3.** Structured approaches to research, idea generation, experimentation and iterative development.

After 240 credits of study (CertHE) you will be able to demonstrate:

- K1.** Imagination in the conceiving, development and production for a range of screen-based production artefacts
- K2.** A rigorous approach to the acquisition of a broad knowledge base
- K3.** Knowledge, imagination and innovation in your approach to design development
- K4.** Knowledge of media theory, storytelling and narrative
- K5.** An engagement with production management requirements for successful production
- K6.** Knowledge of the industry systems, codes and conventions – core ‘generalist’ skillset.

After 360 credits of study (DipHE) you will be able to demonstrate:

- K7.** An awareness of your individual voice, and originality in the design and execution of ideas
- K8.** Critical awareness of the context in which the content for animation and visual effects is produced; and how individual practices relate to those of predecessors, contemporaries, peers and established practitioners
- K9.** Technical fluency in a range of professional production equipment and associated software and systems
- K10.** Confidence as an innovative and creative thinker in the pitch and presentation of your ideas.

After 420 credits of study (BA) you will be able to demonstrate:

- K11.** Professional knowledge of the principles, behaviour and dynamics of working in a team
- K12.** Expertise and technical skills to communicate your vision to others involved in the conceiving, development and production process.

After 480 credits of study (BA Hons) you will be able to demonstrate:

- K13.** An autonomous, creative and professional approach to the specialism of your choice
- K14.** Critical awareness gained from contextualising your own work with a given framework, historical, cultural or generic
- K15.** Lifelong learning with critical interpersonal skills, professional team working practitioners with analytical and contextual reflective abilities.

Programme Outcomes – Skills and other Attributes

The programme provides opportunities for you to develop and demonstrate the following:

After 120 credits of study (FdCert) you will be able to demonstrate:

- FS1.** Academic, personal, and professional skills needed to succeed in higher education
- FS2.** Effective problem-based learning (PBL) skills to work collaboratively and solve simple creative challenges
- FS3.** Basic discipline-specific techniques and competencies safely and appropriately in creative practice.

After 240 credits of study (CertHE) you will be able to demonstrate:

- S1.** An ability to evaluate and reflect on your own practices and assumptions
- S2.** Effective personal organisation and time management skills
- S3.** An appreciation of the benefit of giving and receiving feedback.

After 360 credits of study (DipHE) you will be able to demonstrate:

- S4.** Communication and literacy skills
- S5.** Competence in designing and initiating projects of your own
- S6.** Independent research skills.

After 420 credits of study (BA) you will be able to demonstrate:

- S7.** A systematic understanding of the production pipeline and an ability to exercise significant judgment in a range of situations
- S8.** Management skills – the ability to manage time and people (both oneself and others) successfully
- S9.** In practical context a range of technical skills in accepted industry formats
- S10.** Confidence in evaluating and reflecting your own practices and assumptions.

After 480 credits of study (BA Hons) you will be able to demonstrate:

- S11.** An ability to think systematically and strategically
- S12.** An ability to respond to a range of tasks inc. research and enterprise
- S13.** An ability to experiment with and challenge the conventions of form.

PROGRAMME FEATURES

Programme Overview

This full time 4-year degree in Animation and Visual Effects (VFX) has been built around core principles of inclusivity, storytelling and studio practice to enable engagement with an exciting and evolving industry. The course is designed to be taught as a combination of blended and face-to-face degree. It is a vocationally focussed degree centred around developing industry skillset and technique, exploring research informed creative industry practice, critical thinking and graduate employability.

To help you to meet the programme learning outcomes, the curriculum has been designed to give you an understanding of the fundamental principles, practice and technique of 2D and 3D narrative based animation and visual effects alongside a contextual understanding of the history of animation, its related industries, and possible futures.

You will experience industrial workflows and methodologies as they relate to animation and visual effects and gain practical experience of them. You will be shown the skills required to undertake self-directed research for the continued development of animation skills and for life-long learning should you chose to pursue postgraduate study after your degree.

A programme emphasis is on theory, research and analysis of industry production work. It is designed to build competency in the first level, specialisation in the second and independence in the third, where on graduation you will be ready for employment within the animation industry or for progression to further study. The course ensures that our students are fully prepared for the rapidly changing social and technological contexts in which they will work. A vital part of this is to equip you to make informed choices in your creative use of digital technology, in your professional practice, eventual careers and as lifelong, independent and inter-dependent learners. To aid this the course is structured around 3 distinct strands:

- Practical exploration of creative practice
- Critical thinking, concept and storytelling
- Professional development employability

This combination will allow you to rapidly upskill in preparation for the exciting prospect of working in the animation and visual effects (VFX) industries. The programme has been designed to use a range of teaching approaches that offer the freedom to access course materials at the time of your choice, from any location with an appropriate internet connection. In conjunction with this the programme will include the use of traditional seminars and classroom activities (within a live and online classroom/studio) led by experienced academic and industry proven mentors, giving you real time feedback, peer interaction and helping you feel part of a learning community.

The programme is structured so that you incrementally develop and consolidate the skills you will need. It is designed to produce graduates who can interpret, analyse and exercise critical judgement in the evaluation of theories, concepts, explanations and practices. It will equip you with advanced knowledge and skills in the design of technical and creative aesthetics, new digital formulations and give you the opportunity for professional engagement with production pipelines and processes for animation and visual effects – 'pipeline' refers to the various stages of industry

production (in Shot to Screen) required to add animation or visual effects to a film or TV production.

A critical understanding of animation and visual effects, along with the development of personal attributes and transferable skills, such as a confident, independent voice, critical reflection, collaborative team working and entrepreneurial judgement. Successful graduates will leave with a skillset that will make them competent, critical and capable of following a career in animation and visual effects, or a variety of associated industries.

The professional development and employability strands of the course encourage you to explore a range of potential avenues for graduate employment in the creative industries, where students will also explore opportunities for self-employment, freelance 'portfolio' and develop knowledge of marketing yourself in both the physical and digital marketplace. These will be enhanced through the development of craft, ethical practice, as well as a thorough knowledge of industry funding, the interconnectedness of STEM and the creative arts, and the commercial aspects of practice. Key to your future employability is your ability to work flexibly with an interdisciplinary approach, working at a high level across digital platforms to produce creative content. You will have regular opportunities for professional experience, varying from seminar with animation and visual effects professionals, to volunteering opportunities, summer internships and paid live project work for various media organisations and production company/studio. These initiatives embed the University of Cumbria Career Ahead, Bronze, Silver and Gold awards at levels 4, 5 and 6 into practice.

In addition to the formal teaching on the course we will encourage you to participate in additional, optional workshops and activities that will enhance your learning and employability: digital learning platforms; guest speakers; engagement with external organisations and event; workshops and masterclasses, that will prepare you for elements of the course that may be competitive in nature (pitching and commissioning of work); teaching on the programme promotes equality of opportunity and insists upon treating every student with dignity and respect.

Staff are adept at fostering individual aspirations and provide a nurturing learning environment for people from diverse backgrounds and who may have different educational needs.

The Institute of Education, Arts and Society recognises that students come to the University with diverse and complex learning requirements and ensures that all students are given equal access to educational opportunities, skills development, as well as support and learning resources. You will be able to, at every level, tailor your assessments to your own skillsets and needs. Where the programme is predominantly one of campus-based learning, developed around face-to-face contact and group-based learning activities you will also be expected to engage with the University's Virtual Learning Environment (Blackboard), as well participating in periods of self-directed study.

Deadlines and organisation of production are instrumental to your success. To aid this there will be regular review of work, with the establishment of work screenings, where presentation of work will be a major element of reflective practice in production – these essential opportunities to show work to peer group, tutors and industry professionals to evince production, will help in your understanding of the diverse forms of summative and formative assessment used on the course – we will give you every opportunity to justify approaches and articulate thinking on project. You will

be required to record feedback, and be discursive, as critique and feedback are some of the most important skills in media arts - the communication of work - concise narratives effectively communicated in the right idiom, where you are not trying to persuade but to explain clearly, listen and process what is being reflected back to you.

Specialist Resources - the degree will be taught through a variety of means, student practice benefiting from media arts access to our on campus specialist facilities and resourcing, including:

- a range of lens-based acquisition -professional still and moving image cameras;
- audio recording and studio;
- 3D studio and computer lab;
- broadcast-standard standalone film/TV studio with 4K multi-camera production record and outside broadcast (OB);
- chromakey psyche in TV studio facility;
- professional editing and composite suites;
- screening room and cinematic projection;
- 3D computer lab and studio;
- production workshop.

You will also have use of bespoke technologies, including VR and motion-capture for research into 3D image capture, modelling and display etc.

Integrated Foundation Year (IFY)

The integrated foundation year provides the opportunity for you to settle into university life and gain the confidence and skills to succeed in your chosen arts and creative practice degree through participating in a supportive academic, personal, and professional development programme.

The foundation year modules provide a strong grounding in academic and study skills, preparing you for progression to higher levels of study (Levels 4–6). This route offers a unique opportunity to develop problem-solving, creative, practical, and investigative skills that underpin the interdisciplinary approach to the study of art, design and media, while nurturing your career aspirations.

On the Arts IFY, you will study six modules that explore academic skills and the theoretical and practical concepts underpinning creative disciplines. Two of these modules will be academic and professional skills aligned to your programme of study and the demands of the creative industries, and the following:

- Introducing Creative Research Practice introduces the role of research in creative development, helping you connect ideas to cultural and professional contexts.
- Ideas, Images and Objects develops observation and experimentation skills, encouraging process-led exploration across media.
- Innovation Lab focuses on teamwork and collaborative problem-solving through short, mixed-discipline projects.
- Creative Playbook synthesises research, making, and reflection into a polished artefact, supporting your transition to Level 4.

You will learn how to use specialist equipment and develop techniques for safe and effective practice in studios and digital labs. Through practical application, you will gain awareness of issues such as sustainability, ethics, and audience engagement. Cross-cultural awareness is encouraged through collaborative modules and shared projects with students from other pathways.

Throughout the foundation year, you will develop professional skills such as communication, teamwork, self-management, and organisation. You will make links with the careers team to discuss your skill development and to help you reflect on how these link to your employability and graduate skills. You will also work on your digital skills profile, using university resources such as LinkedIn Learning to enhance your digital literacy and employability.

Level 4: A distinct feature of studying at the University of Cumbria is that in level 4, first year, you will study two modules with all level 4 students of the creative arts and media programmes. These modules are Cultural Contexts and Collaborative Practice. Cultural Contexts introduces you to a range of approaches to reading a diverse range of visual creative arts, and Collaborative Practice is a module where you will work with other students and embark on a problem-solving project practicing professional skills such as leadership, team-working and project management.

Also in the first year, we want you to engage in a series of core workshops and studio practice designed to introduce and develop key knowledge, technical skillset, and technique. Alongside this, and in definition of your production understanding, you will work collaboratively on a media arts live project.

There is an emphasis for this year is on building enthusiasm and confidence, instilling a practical problem-solving ethos and developing foundational craft based skillset. An interdisciplinary shared practice on bespoke proprietary technologies and production will help you build a holistic awareness of industry and a growing confidence in specialism, as well as highlight specific disciplinary choices. This will give you a better idea of the requirements and prerequisites of practice and broader, integrated, understanding of how to more effectively, and professionally complete work.

Level 5: This year will look to develop ideation and conceptual skills and allow you to be experimental in production creation and thinking. It builds on the foundational practice of level 4 and will build your confidence while progressing skillset and technique. In the second year, the development of key production skillset and research is in refinement of practice and a growing appreciation, and identification of specialism interests. Modules may include external collaboration and live brief. Throughout the year you will work on an independent project (negotiated) in tandem with critical 'studio' forum (tutor led). The focus on professional practice will support your production and conceptual thinking and help in your transition into independent research and preproduction for final year project. This is an opportunity for you to build a practice that interests them and identify long term plans. The course will turn production interest into expert knowledge.

Level 6: The final year will look to tailor projects to your individual interests, specialism in practice and professional opportunities, supporting your thinking with high level technical skills and the development of industry level production outcomes - the final year of the course allows you to apply all the skills and learning from previous modules in creating the pre-production for a festival-ready film artefact based completely on your own ideas, aesthetic style, and technical skillset. Modules will support your production, research and development, script and storyboard, and

experimentation with advanced technique in definition of final major project – you will graduate with a professional level skillset, clear career goals and a comprehensive understanding of contemporary animation and visual effects practice.

To recap, you will be encouraged to engage and respond to assessment briefs and other tasks, at every step of your academic journey, both critically and creatively. At Level 4, the focus is on personal development skills, knowledge and understanding. Level 5 has a focus on professional development skills, building confidence in practice, in line with industry and employer expectations. At Level 6 there is an increasingly tailored and personalised approach to learning, with a focus on employability and enterprise and graduate goals. The course develops high-level digital content creators who have analytical, interpretative, written and oral communication skills, and will embed project-management, research skills, team-working, leadership and independent working, into a professional portfolio that you will be proud of.

The course develops advanced subject specific and transferable skills, including high-order conceptual, literacy, communication, and research skills of value in graduate employment, or if you are planning to progress into postgraduate training or research.

Key features of the programme

- **Integrated Foundation Year (IFY):** A supportive entry route designed to build confidence, academic skills, and creative practice for progression to Level 4.
- **Interdisciplinary Approach:** Opportunities to explore multiple creative pathways including Film & TV, Fine Art, Games Design, Graphic Design, Illustration, Photography and Wildlife Media.
- **Process-Led Learning:** Emphasis on research, experimentation, and iterative development rather than focusing solely on final artefacts.
- **Authentic Assessment:** Portfolio-based tasks, showcases, and collaborative projects aligned with industry expectations.
- **Professional Skills Development:** Communication, teamwork, planning, and reflective practice embedded throughout the programme.
- **Access to Specialist Facilities:** Studios, digital labs, print workshops, and industry-standard software from the start of your studies.
- **Digital and Employability Focus:** Integration of digital skills, LinkedIn Learning, and career development activities to prepare for graduate employment.

Learning and Teaching

Teaching

The University of Cumbria Learning, Teaching and Assessment (LTA) strategy underpins the development of this programme. As a student, you will join an inclusive learning community that values diversity and creativity. Teaching, assessment, and support are designed to provide equitable opportunities for you to optimise your potential and develop autonomy as a creative practitioner.

You will learn in a collegiate, facilitative, and dynamic environment, combining studio-based practice, digital learning, and collaborative projects. Our aim is to create a stimulating and

innovative community of learning—whether encountered on campus, online, or through live briefs and external engagement. Facilitated by expert practitioners, you will experience well-equipped studios, digital labs, and flexible learning spaces that reflect professional practice.

BA (Hons) Animation and Visual Effects uses a variety of LTA approaches such as lectures, demonstrations, seminars, workshops, critique reviews, pitching and one to one feedback tutorials to monitor the progress of various projects. You will also undertake self-directed research and within the VLE environment, participate and engage through forums, seminars and lecture as part of a dynamic learning community. This experience is enhanced by a variety of innovative approaches to learning, teaching and assessment, including social media and the use of online technologies/systems. The course will be delivered via a blended approach; the programme has been designed to use a range of contemporary teaching approaches that offer you the freedom to access course materials at the time of your choice, alongside a requirement for flexibility and an ever-evolving industry view in how 'practical' production is taught.

Using both an asynchronous and synchronous teaching programme will allow you to engage in experiential learning for concentrated periods. In conjunction to this, the programme will include the use of traditional seminar, classroom and studio activities, alongside experienced academics giving you real time feedback, peer interaction and engaging you as part of a learning and creative community.

Example of Teaching Activities & Tools

Asynchronous Lectures and Presentations

Including:	Video Lectures
	Podcast Style Lecture
	Interactive Flipped Classroom (with Gamification at its core)
	Tasks
	Forums and Discussion Boards

These activities are designed to fit in with your schedule, allowing you to access at a time that suits you and are resources you can return to.

Synchronous Lectures and Presentations

Including:	Small Group Seminars
	Integrated studio and lab practice
	1:2:1 Tutorials
	Group Task
	Team Projects
	Workshop and masterclass
	Screening of work

These activities are designed to make you feel part of the learning community as well as offering flexibility to fit in with your personal schedule and the provision of production space and studio. The University experience is as much about learning from and with peers as learning from tutors and the programme design reflects this ethos. The curriculum is designed to capture the best of online and traditional teaching methods, to offer the most rounded learner experience to students engaged in the programme.

We use a variety of methods and approaches to learning and teaching to make sure you develop appropriate concepts, knowledge, technique, skillset and understanding of practice. These include study skills, research methods, critical and analytical abilities, and your ability to manage your time, plan and organise your work. Our learning and teaching methods allow you to develop both social and independent learning techniques.

- Lectures are used by tutors using a variety of media as support. You will be expected to take notes, ask questions and contribute to group discussions;
- Seminars will explore lessons in greater depth with both tutor and student-led formats. These sessions will require you to engage in research, connect theory to practice and help develop a broad base of transferable skills.
- E-learning and Blackboard VLE are online platforms where project briefs, timetables and lecture notes can be accessed, as well as module assessments, submission portals, and summative feedback. You will also have opportunities to share in diverse classroom networks and share materials and learning collaboratively in online classroom.
- Practical workshop sessions and masterclasses will provide the opportunity for tutor-led practical activities, designed to allow you to focus on, and experiment with specialist skills development and technique.
- Experiential Learning (learning through reflection on doing) is a key element of your creative practitioner development. You will learn to improve your practical skills through a continuous cycle of applied practice, feedback and reflection.
- Tutorials provide individually tailored feedback. They can range from one-to-one to small group situations. They will be scheduled into timetabled sessions and as the course progresses you will be encouraged to request tutorials with specialist tutors for more involved feedback reflecting the advanced level at which you are working.

We write projects and set tasks that allow you to experience, develop and reflect a broad range of learning.

Independent Learning forms a natural and expected extension of the formal aspects of the course. Your success will be dependent on your willingness to develop, experiment with, and extend the concepts and approaches introduced in workshops, in the application of your independent judgment and in projects that extend beyond the classroom. It is only with continued application that lasting and effective progress in your chosen field can be made. In order to support the needs of diverse learners that underpin the programme's ethos of inclusivity, the programme uses a variety of assessment strategies that test and foster the development of a wide range of key

critical and practical skills including critical reflections, research portfolios, the documentation of individual practice and project proposals.

Foundation Year Approach

We want to motivate you in your foundation year through varied teaching and learning approaches that support different students needs and help you integrate into university life. Modules combine practical workshops, critiques, seminars, and guided independent study, encouraging you to explore ideas, experiment with media, and reflect on your process.

Vocational and creative practice opportunities form an essential part of the programme, enabling you to make meaningful links between theoretical concepts and practical application. During the integrated foundation year, you will work alongside students from a range of creative pathways, allowing for a richer, interdisciplinary learning experience. You will collaborate in groups to solve design problems, research case studies, and deliver creative outputs.

Each module is led by a module leader with overarching responsibility, but delivery is team-taught, ensuring you benefit from subject specialists and experience diverse teaching styles. This approach mirrors the collaborative nature of the creative industries and prepares you for progression to Level 4.

Overview of Learning and Teaching Methods

At Level 3 and 4, you typically have around 12 scheduled learning hours per week, including:

- 6 hours of practical workshops and seminars
- 6 hours of lectures and group critiques
- 13 hours of guided independent study
- 2–4 scheduled personal tutoring meetings across the academic year

At Level 5 and 6 you typically have around 9 scheduled learning hours per week (3 hours per module) including:

- Studio-based workshops and technical demonstrations
- Seminars and lectures on theory and professional practice
- Group tutorials and individual supervision for projects
- Access to specialist facilities for independent making

Independent Learning

When not attending scheduled sessions, you will engage in self-directed study, including research, experimentation, and portfolio development. Independent learning is supported by digital platforms such as Blackboard, LinkedIn Learning and collaborative tools like Padlet, and curated reading lists via OneList.

Digital Capabilities

Digital literacy is embedded throughout the programme. You will use industry-standard software (e.g., Adobe Creative Suite, 3D modelling tools), develop online portfolios, and access LinkedIn Learning and MOOCs to enhance your skills.

Teaching Staff

All staff are active practitioners and researchers with expertise across creative disciplines, including film and television, graphic design, illustration, photography, games design, wildlife media, and fine art. They bring professional experience from the creative industries and maintain current knowledge through ongoing practice and scholarship.

Assessment

The five main principles learning, teaching and assessment strategy are a clear understanding and recognition of the criteria for success; regular formative feedback; opportunity for reflection; personal goal setting and detailed summative assessment. As such we have designed a programme where enquiry and curiosity are the starting points for your learning journey. Where possible, across all the practical modules, we have adopted learning and assessment methods that mirror real-world practice. This means that we set work and design projects in tune with the demands of real-world environments to give you the opportunity to gain experience of working in a manner that mirrors potential future working-place environments. Assessment is either formative or summative. Formative assessment responds to your developing work and summative assessment is a formal response to your finished work. Summative assessment is graded; formative assessment is not.

Integrated Foundation Year (Level 3):

At regular points in a module, we will evaluate your work in progress. For the Integrated Foundation Year formative assessment will include methods such as proposal pitches, critiques, technical checks, peer review and self-assessment. These are valuable points of learning where feedback informs your development. This leads to the summative assessment point where your grades are awarded. We utilise a variety of assessment methods at level 3 including portfolio, presentation, project work and written work.

Levels 4-6:

As an undergraduate you are continually involved in the assessment of your own work, and that of your peers. You will be required to develop interpersonal and team working skills. The range of learning, teaching and assessment methods used enables different aspects of your knowledge to be developed and tested. As well as testing what you know and can do at the end of a module (summative assessment), you'll get regular advice and guidance while your work is in progress (formative feedback) through one-to-one, peer-to-peer and group tutorials where you will have the opportunity to and production, that structured guidance that will help you achieve the best possible results.

- critical reflection;
- group work;
- individual presentations;
- workshop and practical skills tasks;
- practical production;
- essays and written work;

- feature writing;
- research portfolios;
- reflection of creative actions;
- editing.

Via these activities advice and guidance is given while the module is still in progress (formative feedback). Within the programme, you will be supported in engaging with assessment tasks which are appropriate to a particular level of achievement, and which move you towards becoming an independent learner.

A wide range of authentic assessment types are used to develop a full range of work-related skills, e.g. industry led 'live brief', project development both individually and part of a team. This variety of methods ensures the practice, and assessment, of key and graduate skills build a comprehensive awareness of the industry and your potential employability post-graduation. Specific examples of this:

- Module Workbook, bespoke eBooks (electronic handbooks and project record/document), containing information, formative tasks, self-grading exercises, embedded video clips, etc. to assist in specific modules ILO's but also to enhance a culture of independent learning;
- Presentations/Pitching, where you are able to show work to tutors and peers in advance of assignment submission;
- Seminars & Project Surgeries, a series of developmental seminars run where you review and comment on each other's work, guided by tutors;
- Review of portfolio/blog/screenings of 'dailies', regular feedback tutorial opportunities recorded in process of identifying your understanding of practice, materials and creative processes.

All of these activities promote learning partnerships between you, your peers and the staff. This innovative combination allows you to rapidly upskill and prepare for the exciting prospect of working in the Animation and VFX industry, the combination of online workshopping and asynchronous activities reflecting how the industry is currently developing.

Marking and Feedback

Throughout your modules, you will receive ongoing feedback on work undertaken in class, formative tasks, and summative assessments. Feedback and feedforward are designed to help you understand your progress, identify strengths, and highlight areas for improvement to support future work.

Feedback will be provided in a variety of formats, including:

- Verbal feedback during workshops, critiques, and tutorials.
- Written feedback on formative and summative submissions.
- Audio or video-recorded feedback where appropriate, to give detailed commentary on your creative process and outputs.

Following the submission of summative assessments, you will receive feedback and provisional marks within 20 working days, in line with the University of Cumbria Assessment Feedback Policy. This ensures timely guidance to help you reflect and act on feedback before your next assessment.

Assessment Rubric

Rubrics are connected to each individual module and respond to the learning outcomes. Supplemental guidance and marking guidelines will be provided to you so that you can clearly determine our expectations of your work, and project assessment criteria. Assignment deadlines are staggered throughout each semester in order to facilitate your time management and to avoid the 'bunching' of submissions. Feedback is detailed and corresponds with University marking criteria and specified learning outcomes.

Graduate Prospects

The digital media industries continue growing at a remarkable pace and finding enough talented employees in these areas is difficult even now. 3D Animation and Visual Effects are at the forefront now in all forms of Media, ranging from Film, Animation and Games. The skill shortage has been noted repeatedly.

As a successful graduate of the BA (Hons) Animation and Visual Effects programme you will be able to access a variety of career options. A degree becomes a passport to enter an extensive range of careers throughout the creative and related film industries including advertising; digital designer; film directing, producer role; editor/technician; game artist; multimedia specialist; digital production designer, theatre/television/film; media engineer; special effects technician/technical director; broadcast production; freelance television/film/video producer as well as teaching and lecturing.

Transferrable Skills:

- Team management and leadership
- Negotiation and communication skills
- Self-reliance
- Working with others
- Planning and production management
- Presentation skills
- Critique, reflective practice and evaluation
- Research, critical and analytical skills
- Problem solving

With various progression routes as well as media industry careers, including freelance portfolio work, graduate training schemes, teaching & lecturing and postgraduate education.

*<https://www.screenskills.com/media/3883/2020-08-10-employer-and-hirer-survey.pdf>

Research indicates that 47% of companies in the visual effects, animation and video games industry were experiencing a skills shortage - compared with 5% of employers across other areas of the UK economy.

According to a recent BFI UK Screen Alliance report to Government committee there are some 12,000 FTE employees in the UK Visual Effects and Postproduction industry, approximately half employed as artists and technical directors, and the other half made up all other production roles, including co-ordinators, producers and other support staff: *“The UK’s VFX industry is highly regarded in a fiercely competitive global market and attracts inward investment particularly from the USA on Hollywood feature films and box-set dramas for streaming video on-demand platforms.”*

<https://www.ukscreenalliance.co.uk/subpages/the-vfx-workforce/>

IBC365, an online community platform providing business knowledge for the global media, entertainment and technology industry, determine that the versatility of the VFX and Animation industries provides an opportunity to production in the face of recent events *“Managing VFX production effectively is even more critical as both multi-facility collaboration and remote working become routines across film and TV”*, and that while the UK has a “world renowned Visual Effects Sector”, the impact of Brexit means that the industry will be hit with a “chronic” shortage of skilled workers. Articles share that the number of overseas workers has increased from previous years, with Visual Effects recruiters saying there is a global shortage of highly skilled artists and strong competition to attract them. In the UK, the industry and government have invested in the NextGen Skills Academy and developing apprenticeship programmes to support the demand, alongside Government supported investment through organisations like [ScreenSkills](#). There are good relationships between Visual Effects and animation companies and UK universities already, with some being encouraged to becoming ‘centres of excellence’ to rival European counterparts. We would hope to develop strong relationships with these initiatives and investment opportunities.

<https://committees.parliament.uk/writtenevidence/7302/html/>

The Government has also promised sizeable investment in the creative industries in a sector deal through the Department for Digital Culture, Media and Sport. VR, AR, digital installations, gaming and film, alongside large-scale R&D projects will receive a large proportion of this funding.

<https://www.prospects.ac.uk/careers-advice/what-can-i-do-with-my-degree/animation>

<https://www.prospects.ac.uk/job-profiles/vfx-artist>

The course helps define transferrable skillset and technique for students undertaking this course so that opportunities, and careers in related fields and disciplines post-graduation are clear. Film industry practice is increasingly looking to remote, smaller, independent studios for franchised production, and the students will graduate with skills that will appeal to smaller companies that require motion graphics or promotional broadcast material for instance; other related fields include medical, product or architectural visualisation etc. as the demand for 3D and production skills increasingly diversifies.

MODULES

Level 3			
Code	Title	Credits	Status
FYUN3014	Introducing Creative Research Practice	20	Compulsory
FYUN3015	Seeing, Thinking, Making Meaning	20	Compulsory
FYUN3016	Ideas, Images and Objects	20	Compulsory
FYUN3017	Innovation Lab	20	Compulsory
FYUN3018	Creative Industries Toolkit	20	Compulsory
FYUN3019	Creative Playbook	20	Compulsory
Students exiting at this point with 120 credits would receive a FdCert Animation and Visual Effects			

Year 1			
Code	Title	Credits	Status
AVFX4001	Animation And Vfx Pipelines	40	Compulsory
UCIA4030	Cultural Contexts	20	Compulsory
AVFX4102	Action, Character & Performance	20	Compulsory
AVFX4103	Virtual Stagecraft	20	Compulsory
UCIA4020	Collaborative Practice	20	Compulsory
Students exiting at this point with 240 credits would receive a CertHE Animation and Visual Effect (with Integrated Foundation Year)			

Year 2			
Code	Title	Credits	Status
AVFX5001	Shot To Screen	40	Compulsory
AVFX5101	Script, Storyboard & Previs	20	Compulsory
AVFX5102	Experimental Narrative & Concept	20	Compulsory
AVFX5103	Animation And Vfx Cinematography	20	Compulsory
MDIA5007	Professional Development	20	Compulsory
Students exiting at this point with 360 credits would receive a DipHE Animation and Visual Effect (with Integrated Foundation Year)			

Year 3			
Code	Title	Credits	Status
AVFX6001	Research Brief	40	Compulsory
AVFX6101	Production Review	20	Compulsory
AVFX6000	Professional Studio Project	40	Compulsory
SCRP6102	Festival And Exhibition	20	Compulsory
<p>Students exiting at this point with 420 credits would receive a BA Animation and Visual Effect (with Integrated Foundation Year)</p> <p>Students exiting at this point with 480 credits would receive a BA (Hons) Animation and Visual Effect (with Integrated Foundation Year)</p>			

Additional Module Information

Students must successfully complete 100 credits at Level 3 before progressing to Level 4. A failed student will not be permitted to re-register on the same programme.

This programme uses a 40-credit module structure in levels 4-6 this allows for larger / sustained assessments with a greater emphasis on creative development and on modelling process and outcomes on industry practice.

The 40 credit modules are specifically designed to encourage you to develop your personal management skills and give you the opportunity to experience practice more closely related to the timeframes and conditions experienced in the media/creative industries. You will be well supported on these modules with stop-reviews, timely formative assessment points and interim objectives that monitor progress, encourage reflection and guard you against failure.

Larger modules of 40 credits are recognised, by the QAA, to be typical in Arts programmes, and embrace the pedagogic approach to encourage work on significant bodies of work reflective of industry.

Key to Module Statuses

Compulsory modules	Must be taken although it may possible to compensate as a marginal fail (within the limits set out in the Academic Regulations and provided that all core or pass/fail elements of module assessment have been passed).
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Timetables

Timetables are normally available August. Please note that while we make every effort to ensure timetables are as student friendly as possible, scheduled learning can take place on any day of the week.

Our Timetabling team work hard to ensure that timetables are available to students as far in advance as possible, however there may be occasional exceptions such as in the case of teaching which falls outside of the usual academic calendar. The UoC academic calendar runs from August to July, so timetabling information for programmes which include teaching sessions in August may not be published until closer to the August delivery.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Student Support

We provide responsive student support that promotes student success. Our approach to student support is designed to support achievement and progression, champion inclusivity and accessibility, prepare you for opportunities beyond study, and promote independence and resilience, enabling you to achieve your potential.

As a student of the University of Cumbria, you will be taught by academics and expert practitioners who facilitate learning through structured inquiry. You will be provided with access to high quality academic resources through physical and digital libraries and will be supported to develop skills that enable you to become a critical, reflective, discerning and independent learner and researcher.

Induction

As a student at the University of Cumbria, you will have access to a University of Cumbria on-line provision, currently known as 'Head Start'. This feature provides guidance and exercises for you to enable you to prepare for academic study. Furthermore, you will have access to staff details to ask any questions in advance of commencing the programme.

An undergraduate induction is timetabled for the week before the programme delivery starts and will be your first week on the programme. You will undertake a series of activities designed to form cohesion amongst your peer group, to familiarise you with the University and introduce you to a range of support services who are there to help you settle into university life and help you progress through your studies. You will be shown how to use our Virtual Learning Environment (VLE) which is called 'Blackboard' and how to submit assessments using 'Turn it In'. You will attend centrally organised sessions, Student Life and Help is at Hand.

During the induction week you are allocated a Personal Tutor (PT), as are all students at the University, but in addition foundation year students will receive dedicated supported from the Student Learning Developer.

Transitioning to Level 4:

Progressing students will not be required to attend all induction activities at Level 4 but will be invited to activities that will enable them to meet and feel fully integrated with their new cohort such as introduction to programme structure, modules and team building activities. In addition, the students will be invited by the programme leader to mentor and support new students in other activities such as campus tours and general tips and guidance on being a UoC student.

Personal Tutor

You will also be allocated a Personal Tutor at the start of your programme. Your Personal Tutor will be proactively involved in the delivery of your programme and will have contact with you throughout your time at the University. They will support your learning and development, including through tutorials, progress reviews and other support as outlined in the Personal Tutoring Policy. You will meet with your Personal Tutor on a minimum of four occasions per academic year at Level 3 and 4 (and twice yearly at Levels 5 and 6). These meetings are in addition to any discussions you may initiate which are without limit. The scheduled meetings will include the opportunity to

examine your marks and feedback across modules to identify practice which can be encouraged across modules and recognising where further support may be beneficial.

Student Learning Developers (IFY)

During the first year of your programme (Foundation Year) you will have access to support from dedicated Student Learning Developers (IFY support). These advisors will provide you with individual academic and pastoral support alongside the academic team to ensure you reach your full potential whilst you are on this programme. In particular, they will help you to adjust adjustment to university study, assist you in the navigation of the academic environment, policies, expectations and signposting to a wide range of services. They also work with you and your personal tutor to help you to develop your own strategies for effective study and provide additional one-to-one and group support in academic writing and study skills.

The [Student Enquiry Point](#) is a simple way to contact Student Services. Using the Student Enquiry Point tile on the Student Hub you can submit an enquiry to any of the Student Services teams, which includes:

- [Careers and Employability](#)
- [Chaplaincy](#) for faith and spiritual wellbeing
- [Mental Health and Wellbeing](#)
- [Digital Skills](#)
- [Disability and Specific Learning Difficulty \(SpLD\)](#)
- [International Student Support](#)
- [Library](#)
- [Money Advice Service](#)
- [Safeguarding](#)
- [Skills@Cumbria](#)
- [Sports and Fitness Facilities](#)
- [University Student Accommodation](#)

As a student at the University of Cumbria you automatically become a member of the Students' Union. The Students' Union represents the views and interests of students within the University.

The Students' Union is led by a group of Student Representatives who are elected by students in annual elections. They also support approximately 400 Student Academic Reps within each cohort across the entire University. The Students' Union represent the views of their cohort and work with academic staff to continuously develop and improve the experience for all University of Cumbria students. You can find out more about who represents you at www.ucsu.me.

You can email at any time on studentvoice@cumbria.ac.uk.

Course Costs

Tuition Fees

Course fees can be found here [BA \(Hons\) Animation and Visual Effects with Integrated Foundation Year - University of Cumbria](#)

The following course-related costs are included in the fees:

- Use of industry standard equipment, technical resources and technician expertise.
- All essential software (editing, production tools)
- We endeavour to provide subsidised enhancement activities such as guest speakers and field trips.

Additional Costs

The following course-related costs are not included in the fees:

Typical course-related expenses students may reasonably need to budget for. They vary by individual choice and project requirements:

Study Materials

- Stationery & consumables (notebooks, pens, pencils, USB drives, printing/photocopying): approx. £30–£40 per year.
- Books and journals (optional personal copies beyond library access): approx. £50–£100 per year (core texts are usually available in the University library).

Production & Equipment Supplies

- Students may choose to invest in personal gear (e.g., external hard drives, microphones, lighting accessories) for individual projects—costs vary widely (£100–£500+ depending on quality and needs).

Field Trips / Course-Related Travel

- Optional trips (e.g., filming on location, industry visits, festival attendances) may incur travel, accommodation, or subsistence costs (these are typically optional and dependent on the year group/teaching plans).

Software & Subscriptions

- Students may choose to subscribe to personal copies (e.g., Adobe Creative Cloud) for use outside university labs (~£10–£50/month, depending on plan—usually educational copies or student discounts alleviate costs).

Industry Events & Memberships (Optional)

- Attendance at film festivals, professional workshops, or membership in external creative organisations/clubs may incur fees (variable, optional).

Exhibitions & Showreel Promotion

- Costs for film festival submissions, screening fees, publicity materials (optional but relevant for final year projects) vary by event.

As emerging VFX artists and animators you can experience most of the industry standard software we will be utilising on the course by downloading fully working versions of the software, for free, through student licensing.

Exceptions to the Academic Regulations

This programme operates in accordance with the University's Academic Regulations and Academic Procedures and Processes.

External and Internal Benchmarks

At the center of the University's mission is the provision of an accessible and outstanding student experience, and we aim to ensure as many people as possible benefit from the transformational opportunities provided by higher education. Our Corporate Strategy demonstrates the University's firm commitment to accessible higher education, in terms of widening participation and access. It also recognises that the University has a regional commitment to an area with significant pockets of low participation, low educational aspiration and attainment in higher education.

The Foundation Year is designed for students who have the ability to study for a degree but don't have the qualifications to enter directly onto a three-year (FT) honours degree. It therefore attracts many students from non-traditional educational backgrounds and under-represented groups.

External reference points may include:

QAA Subject Benchmark Statement for Communication, Media, Film and Cultural Studies is available from the [QAA website](#)

QAA subject benchmark statement for Art and Design is available from the [QAA website](#)

ScreenSkills (Skillset) have informed the design of this programme, specific detail to be found here: <https://www.screenskills.com/industry/animation/>

The programme is also informed by the following internal reference points:

- Business Plan for the Institute of Education, Arts and Society
- [The Academic Strategy - Transforming lives and livelihoods](#)
- cumbria.ac.uk/media/towards-2030.pdf
- [Learning, Teaching and Assessment Plan](#)
- [Academic Regulations](#)

Disclaimer

This programme has been approved (validated) by the University of Cumbria as suitable for a range of delivery modes, delivery patterns, and delivery sites. This level of potential flexibility does not reflect a commitment on behalf of the University to offer the programme by all modes/patterns and at all locations in every academic cycle. The details of the programme offered for a particular intake year will be as detailed on the programme webpage:

<https://www.cumbria.ac.uk/study/courses/undergraduate/animation-and-visual-effects/animation-and-visual-effects-ify/>

Date of Programme Specification Production

July24

Date Programme Specification was last updated	April 2026
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