

Nottingham Trent University Course Specification

Basic Course Information

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| 1. Awarding Institution: | Nottingham Trent University |
| 2. School/Campus: | School of Art and Design/ City campus |
| 3. Final Award, Course Title and Modes of Study: | MA Animation |
| 4. Normal Duration: | Full-Time 1 year |
| 5. UCAS Code: | n/a |

6. Overview and general educational aims of the course

Animation production is a varied art form that encompasses design, technology, conceptual development and filmmaking. Study at the Undergraduate level allows you to explore many different facets of the animation process and skills within the animation process. The aims of the MA Animation course, are to build on existing skills and to provide you with the opportunity through research and focused study, to develop specialist skills and knowledge to enhance your understanding of the subject area and support your employment goals.

In the early part of the course, there is an exploration of animation production, concepts and context. Through a process of evaluation and reflection of your strengths, you will identify a specific area for further study and development. The main emphasis of the course is on a focused exploration and refinement of your skills. There is flexibility in the content of seminars and lectures, with the opportunity to develop content specific to the student's research area and in the selection of visiting artists and professionals.

It is essential that you understand the historical context within which your work exists and identify where you see your animation practice developing. This is supported through contextual lectures and seminars in which you will study and discuss the global animation history, theory and practice.

Within animation production, there are many career paths. As an MA Animation student, the primary areas of further study include; storyboard artists, character designers, environment and prop designers, pre-visualisation artists, 2D animator, 3D animator, stop motion animator or experimental animator. The final project is as a synthesis of your learning and development.

Upon graduation, you may choose to continue your animation career in a commercial production studio, in games production or feature animation. Additionally, you may choose to work in visual effects production or as an independent filmmaker. You will develop relevant professional attributes gained through professional experiences embedded into the design, learning and assessment of your course.

There are two module options to select from on the course:

Option A – **'Animation'**. This is a year-long 180 credit-module. This option focuses on skills development leading to a practice based research project.

Option B – **'Animation' (Option B)**. This is a year-long 160 credit module, with an additional 20 credit 'Advanced Art and Design Research' module. The focus of this option is on the production of an academically grounded research project which relates to theory and practice associated with animation production.

All students will commence on the 180-credit module, in November, with consultation with your course leader, you will decide whether to choose Option A and stay on this module, or the 160-credit module, Option B, with the 20-credit module 'Advanced Art and Design Research'.

This 20-credit module has been devised for students who are interested in further postgraduate study, or research roles following master's study, and taking this module would support applications for further research study, such as MPhil or PhD, which you may be interested in pursuing in the future. It is designed to support your understanding of how your advanced practice can be a valid component of a research process, that makes a contribution to knowledge, giving you skills which enable you to design a research enquiry as well as to carry it out systematically while giving you an overview of the traditions of research on which your creative practice may draw. The teaching and learning methods for this module include lectures, written assignments, discussions and presentations.

7. Course outcomes

Course outcomes describe what you should know and be able to do by the end of your course if you take advantage of the opportunities for learning that we provide.

Knowledge and understanding

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

- Contextualise your work through critical reflection of historical and contemporary practice and production in animation (B)
- Plan and develop a project through the research and evaluation of relevant animation production practices (B)
- Demonstrate expertise in advanced research methods and methodologies to resolve your project (B)
- Reference animation production to identify the market sector within which your work is situated (B)

- Evidence through your body of work, the understanding of character development and storytelling inherent in animation production
- Demonstrate creativity and intellectual curiosity in the application and synthesis of subject knowledge (B)

(B) – these specific learning outcome statements have been benchmarked against the QAA benchmark statements for similar courses and level.

Skills, qualities and attributes

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

- Communicate your project development and results effectively through discussions and visual presentations (B)
- Demonstrate the ability to learn independently, through self-directed study utilise effective planning and time management (B)
- Evidence skills as a reflective practitioner, reflecting on your own work and the critique of others, to progress and develop your skills and practice (B)
- Experiment with and explore innovative production techniques and concepts to support creativity in your work
- Develop a professional portfolio that supports the requirements of your target market sector, evidencing your consideration of career opportunities (B)
- Create visual development outcomes, that evidence advanced knowledge and skill in animation production (B)

(B) – these specific learning outcome statements have been benchmarked against the QAA benchmark statements for similar courses and level.

8. Teaching and learning methods

In the MA Animation, there is an emphasis placed on self-directed learning, the expectation of the course is that you will spend 32 hours a week in self-directed study. The course content will be taught through lectures, group and individual tutorials, seminars and workshops.

The Course teaching, learning and assessment strategy is informed by the principles, policies, practices and regulations detailed in the University's Quality Handbook, also supported by the School's Assessment and Feedback Principles and Guidelines.

The following teaching and learning methods are used within the course:

- Lectures
- Tutorials
- Group tutorials
- Seminars (including peer group activities, film screenings, discussions and presentations)

- Workshops
- NTU's online workplace (NOW)
- Directed and self-directed learning
- Off-site activity

The development of specialist skills and knowledge demands a high level of commitment from you and is essential in support of the attainment of your employment goals.

You will be taught by experienced lecturers and industry professionals. Guest speakers will discuss current animation practice, industry trends, innovations and developments. Diversity of areas of study are offered to enable you to develop a specialist interest, narrowing your field of study from the very broad study at undergraduate level.

There will be opportunities to travel to animation festivals and screenings both internationally and within the UK. In addition, you may make visits to relevant exhibitions, companies and screenings for research as part of your self-directed study.

Animation production is most often a collaborative process, you may choose to take the opportunity to work with other Masters students in the School of Art and Design

All course documents, handbooks, seminar readings, guidance for specific tasks and some teaching and learning materials will be available on NTU's online workspace (NOW). The NOW is also a source of access to other information and support for learning provided by the university including software tutorials, revision tools for grammar and the library information services (LIS) etc.

The course is designed so that you will receive continuous feedback on your progress. Continual assessment is one of the most important learning and teaching strategies within the course, enabling you to develop as an independent learner. You will be encouraged to reflect on your work and undertake self and peer assessment, developing a clear understanding of the assessment criteria. The purpose of assessment is to enable you to demonstrate that you have met the learning outcomes of the course and reached a specified standard to attain the award.

9. Assessment methods

You will be assessed continually with formal and informal formative assessment points throughout the course. You will receive feedback on your work in progress and on assessed tasks as you go, from tutors and from your peers. At formalized formative

assessment points, you will receive written feedback and an indicative grade (at least once per term) to enable you to understand how well you are progressing in relation to meeting the course learning outcomes and for you to make a reflective assessment of your progress based in part on the formalized feedback. The indicative grades do not count towards the final grade, the work from the year is assessed together at the end of the module.

Option A Animation' 180 credit point module

This option focuses on skills development leading to a practice based research project. This project will be clearly articulated in the Learning Agreement and Project Proposal. You will also be assessed on both the development and final outcome of your project. You will be required to produce a Reflective Journal documenting your research and process. In the final submission you will demonstrate career preparedness through your portfolio and supporting documentation.

Animation (option B) 160 credit point module

The focus of this option is on the production of an academically grounded research project which relates to theory and practice associated with animation production. This project will be clearly articulated in the Learning Agreement and Project Proposal. You will be assessed on both the development and final outcome of your project. You will produce a Reflective Journal to document your progress. In the final submission you will demonstrate the visual outcomes developed alongside your academic research.

At the end of the module (the course), you will submit all of your work and this will be assessed holistically against the learning outcomes. This means all work formatively assessed during the module, will also form part of the assessment process and be considered when awarding your grade. Therefore, your final grade will reflect your overall achievements against the outcomes.

This process of continual assessment, feedback and holistic summative assessment at the end of the course is designed to encourage you to become an independent and reflective learner, evaluating your learning experiences in order to inform the next ones, building on strengths and tackling any weaknesses as appropriate as you progress through the module. It also allows you to learn from the course before your work is finally assessed. Giving feedback to others through formative peer assessment in scheduled sessions and informally, as part of the cohort will also help sharpen your critical skills and reflection on your own learning.

The assessments guide you through a range of learning experiences, which enable you to develop knowledge and skills appropriate to your final project. Following summative assessment at the end of the module, if for any reason a full Masters award is not achieved your work will be assessed against the learning outcomes for interim awards PG Certificate in MA Animation and PG Diploma in MA Animation.

The course conforms to the common assessment regulations for taught postgraduate courses (section 15 of the university's Quality Handbook, September 2016). The course does not seek any special interpretations or dispensations in relation to these regulations.

10. Course structure and curriculum

At the start of the course, you will meet the other students and find out more about the course and the facilities.

Initially, there will be an evaluation of your prior knowledge and skill and an indication of your intended area of study. As an introduction to the course, there will be a 5-week series of intense workshops offered. The topics explored in the workshops include, 2D digital animation, stop motion animation and 3D animation, 3D modeling, character design and storyboarding. You will choose which of the workshops to attend and they serve as an opportunity to explore new areas of production that you may wish to develop.

There will also be an 'Induction'- a combination of course and University events, which will help you to adjust to the department, school and NTU, Masters study and the course. You can find out more about this at the Starting at NTU website (details of this will arrive after you receive your offer confirmation).

You will write a project proposal, outlining your study and research plan for the remainder of the year, culminating in your research project. It may be a combination of practical skills development and conceptual and technological research. The project proposal and outcome will be developed through discussion with the course team and should outline your intended area of specialisation.

Through the next section of the course, the emphasis is on the continued experimentation, development and refinement of practical skills. Research methods and contextual studies will be discussed in seminars and tutorials, with an emphasis on the progression of your project.

Your project development will be documented in your blog, and progress will be evaluated through individual and group tutorials.

After Easter, the focus is on the production and completion of your project. There will also be discussion of your graduation options and your career goals, whether it is the continued development of your personal and professional skills, industry placement or independent practice. As new opportunities for employment in the animation industry change and develop, it is important that you explore them within your specialist area. The course embeds employability throughout. Early in the course you will be engaged in learning core employability skills and career planning activity.

If your focus is on research and academic development with the Option B 160/20

credit modules, you have the potential to explore opportunities for further study at the PhD level.

Finally, through consultation with course staff you will prepare portfolio materials and self-promotion documentation.

11. Admission to the course

Entry requirements.

For current information regarding all entry requirements for this course, please see the 'Applying' tab on the NTU course information web page.

12. Support for learning

You will be provided with a wide range of academic and pastoral support and advice. In addition to working closely with your tutor in managing your project and outcomes, the following support is also available.

English Language support takes place once a week and is designed to support study and progression at the master's level.

Progress tutorials take place regularly with your tutor. After each assessment, you will receive feedback from your tutor. Pastoral tutorials will take place with the course leader.

Professional skills and employability workshops relevant to home and international students will take place during the year of study.

If you have predefined individual requirements (for example, specific learning difficulties such as dyslexia, ongoing physical or sensory impairments, medical or mental health conditions) you should alert your course team to these at an early stage. In addition to the support that the lecturers on your course will offer, you also have access to a wide range of specialist staff to support a variety of issues that might arise, e.g. financial, health, wellbeing, disability etc. Language and academic support is also provided for international students who require additional study support.

NTU's Online Workspace (NOW) contains all documentation relating to every aspect of the master's course. The Graduate Student Handbook (available on NOW) contains details of all the support available to you.

If for any reason due to your specific circumstances, for example your employment, you feel that you are unable to fulfill your course commitments, you need to inform your tutor and course leader. This will allow the course team to consider arrangements in order to support you with your progression on the course.

13. Graduate destinations/employability

A wide range of career opportunities are available within Animation and its related industries. Potential career opportunities include feature and televisual production, advertising, games production and independent production, through to more peripheral digital media careers such as architectural previsualization. Graduates could also pursue a teaching career in FE or Higher Education or progress to PhD, with the goal of teaching and/or research.

An emphasis is placed upon your understanding of the market place and identifying future career opportunities, so the course promotes industry research, and networking to establish relationships with relevant animation companies. You will leave with a body of work that reflects your skills and currency to potential employers.

Crucially, the MA gives you the ability to re-examine future ambitions; some students have entirely refocused their careers. The independent learning and autonomy you achieve encourages you to develop your full potential to effectively present yourself to potential employers. All the project work undertaken in both the elements of this module enhances your knowledge, skills and professional awareness.

14. Course standards and quality

All courses conform to University requirements. There are well-established systems for managing the quality of the curriculum within the School. External examiners are appointed to each course and report on the appropriateness of the curriculum, the quality of student work and the assessment process.

The School reviews, defines and updates its courses and modules; dialogue between staff and students plays an important part in this process. Whilst there are good informal relationships between staff and students, the School and University, we also have formal channels for student feedback. A student/staff liaison committee is held three times a year and formal module evaluation is gathered by a questionnaire.

Student representatives, elected by the student group, attend and contribute to discussion at course committee meetings, three times a year. An External Examiner with specialist knowledge is appointed to monitor the quality and standards of the provision and to support the course team in further developing the course. Part of their role is to review samples of assessed work and confirm at the Board of Examiners that the internal assessment and moderation practices are fair and in line with the School and NTU's policies. The external examiner also writes a report at the end of each academic year and this will be available to you via NOW, together with a response written by the Course Team and the Course Committee.

At the end of each year the course team write an evaluative Course Interim Report (CIR), informed by staff and student feedback. This is then discussed by the School Academic Standards and Quality Committee and actions are identified. A School report is then passed to the University and key points then inform new policy which is fed back to the School and the External Examiner.

15. Assessment regulations

This course is subject to the University's Common Assessment Regulations (located in Section 16C of the Quality Handbook).

16. Additional Information

Collaborative partner(s):	None
Course referenced to Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education (QAA)	Librarianship, Information, Knowledge, Records and Archives
Benchmark Statements:	Management March (2015) QAA, Master's Degree Characteristics Statements (2015)
Course recognised by:	
Date this course specification approved:	September 2017 (DAG)

Any additional information: