Nottingham Trent University Course Specification

Basic Course Information

1. Awarding Institution: Nottingham Trent University
2. School/Campus: School of Art & Design
3. Final Award, Course Title and Modes of Study: FdSc in VFX Production Technology (Full time)
4. Normal Duration: 30 weeks (September to June)
5. UCAS Code: I700

Overview and general educational aims of the course

This course will be predominantly delivered at The Confetti Institute of Creative Technologies (CICT) in Nottingham. CICT are a collaborative partner of Nottingham Trent University.

Visual Effects (VFX) has become an integral part of the production process for films, television productions, and commercials. The UK’s VFX industry is world renowned for its cutting edge work attracting studios to shoot their films here and in 2010 was a significant reason for the $920 million of inward investment, making VFX one of the highest earning areas of the filmmaking process. The increased demand on the UK’s VFX industry has led to a need for a greater pool of new talent. However VFX companies are increasingly turning their attention abroad as there has not been a growth in the number of UK graduates to feed it. Therefore the infrastructure of the FdSc in VFX Production Technology has been designed to provide you with the core skills required to work in the VFX industry.

VFX employees are required to have advanced computer skills working with specific software combined with a detailed understanding of the mathematical and scientific principles that underpin this subject area. Therefore the FdSc in Visual Effects Production Technology will have these key skills and abilities at its core providing a creative education whilst developing skills in VFX production to ensure the course will produce graduates ideally placed to work within the Visual Effects industry.

The FdSc in Visual Effects Production course aims to create ambitious graduates who are equipped with the relevant skillset for entry in the VFX industry by ensuring the industry’s voice is embedded at the heart of the curriculum.

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:

1. Identify and apply the scientific principles that underpin Visual Effects technologies and practice.
2. Evaluate the impact of technology on working practices within Visual Effects production within a historical, commercial and economic context.
4. Utilise complex analytical tools to identify and resolve problems during Visual Effects production management and workflow.
5. Create authentic Visual Effects products that apply the language of film (narrative, genre, technical codes and conventions) used to make meaning within Visual Effects sequences.
6. Monitor and evaluate the performance of a range of technologies used within Visual Effects, production and post production.
7. Develop and realise creative ideas in a range of Visual Effects outputs working...
within different production and post production environments.

8. Evaluate and assess work within the context of Visual Effects adapting and responding to current industry practice.

**Skills, qualities and attributes**

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

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<tr>
<th>Skill</th>
<th>Description</th>
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<tr>
<td>9. Apply sustainable practice within production environments</td>
<td>including health and safety, manual handling and risk assessment.</td>
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<td>10. Use a range of computer software applications within post</td>
<td>production to create, manipulate, and output audio-visual content across a</td>
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<td>production to create, manipulate, and output audio-visual content</td>
<td>range of visual effects disciplines.</td>
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<td>11. Demonstrate competency in a range of Visual Effects production</td>
<td>roles and responsibilities.</td>
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<td>12. Interpret, use and apply information from technical literature</td>
<td>concerning Visual Effects production and post production technology.</td>
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<td>13. Apply appropriate research techniques in the academic, creative</td>
<td>and production environment.</td>
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<td>and production environment.</td>
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<td>14. Develop proposals and treatments for a range of Visual Effects</td>
<td>output.</td>
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<td>output.</td>
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8. **Teaching and learning methods**

Within individual modules the delivery of the material encourages increasing levels of skill development and student participation, ensuring that, as you progress through the course, you become a more confident and independent learner. We aim to include a range of methods of delivery that may include:

- Lectures
- Seminars
- Workshop
- Group tutorials
- Academic Tutorials (ATs)
- Presentations and Pitches
- Team working
- Independent learning
- Visiting industry professionals

All the modes of delivery are structured to develop on-going abilities and skills through exploring ideas and problem solving. The course will offer a broad range of assessment methods.

9. **Assessment methods**

Assessments include design, planning and execution of visual effects sequences, portfolio building, lab report, reflective journal, formal essay, case study and a negotiated ‘Live’ professional experience project brief. Each assessment undertake for each module will enable you to experience a variety of roles within the VFX industry whilst enabling you to find their own specialism within the VFX spectrum.

Assessment is clearly defined in module specifications and module guides and each module has a final summative assessment at the end of each module but is also supported with specific formative assessments during the course of the modules. Lecture, tutorial and seminar dialogue allow you ownership and understanding of the assessment process. Informal formative feedback is provided in tutorials, seminars and individual surgery sessions or via online methods.

Recorded formal formative feedback is provided against the learning outcomes of the module at appropriate points, i.e. when you are best placed to be able to act on that feedback. Formative feedback is completed within the 21-day time frame and is returned via the NOW.

Summative feedback occurs at the conclusion of each module and is completed in line with University regulation.
10. **Course structure and curriculum**

**Level Five: FdSc in VFX Production Technology. 240 Credit Points**

The course is structured in a modular manner, over two years of study. The following modules make up the programme of study.

**Level Four (120 Credits)**
- Asset Production for VFX Sequences (20 Credits)
- Creating 3D Content for VFX (40 Credits)
- Foundation in VFX Compositing and Matte Production (20 Credits)
- Matte Painting and Environments (20 Credits)

**Level Five (120 Credits)**
- 3D Matchmoving and Rig Removal (20 Credits)
- Rigging, Digital Sculpture and Creature Effects (40 Credits)
- Effects Animation for VFX (40 Credits)
- VFX Industry Practice (20 Credits) *(Delivered at NTU)*

You will study towards 120 credit points in each year of study. The first year of study focuses on introductory material to establish a base level understanding of theoretical principles and practical processes. Your second year of study will expand your technical understanding of the core subject disciplines, whilst also introducing you to new contexts and working practices. During the second year of study you will participate in an ‘Industry’ based module, designed to introduce you to the Visual Effects workplace, through a ‘live’ client brief. This provides you with an opportunity to put into practice the skills acquired in your other modules within an industry setting.

The assignments completed across all modules of the course are designed so that you will have developed a core set of skills by the end of your studies that will prepare you for work in industry. Additionally, the work you complete as part of your studies will form an ongoing collection of work that demonstrates your developing professionalism in the subject area, thus helping support your entry into industry or further study after graduation.

11. **Admission to the course**

For current information regarding all entry requirements, please see the applying tab on the course web page.

12. **Support for learning**

Prior to enrolling at CICT you will be invited to attend a summer masterclass where you will have the opportunity to use the specialist kit and meet other students on your course and to start to feel part of Confetti.

Following enrolment CICT hold a series of structured induction events to help assist you in familiarising yourself with CICT and NTU. These include both academic and social events. This will include student orientation of the NTU campus, including a library visit and activities organised by NTU SU.

CICT has a dedicated ALS team to provide academic support to HE students. Most support offered is one-to-one; however, there are also taught sessions using the Higher Education Assessment Toolkit (HEAT), an online and paper study skills resource. There are also scheduled drop-in sessions. In addition to academic support CICT have an educational support team (EST), who also look after your welfare. You will also be assigned a named personal tutor at the start of your year who can act as a guide in more personal matters.

There are a number of systems and processes CICT uses to track and measure your progress including your attendance, punctuality submissions, tutorials, etc. – and these are used extensively to monitor and to inform action. You are entitled to one official tutorial per term which is formally recorded. In addition, staff are often available for you to talk with informally after and between taught sessions, and CICT encourages close staff-student relationships.

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Your studies will be also be supported through extensive use of the universities VLE and you will be directed to use the NOW system which encourages you to take responsibility for your own learning through directed module activities. All related module information can be accessed on the NOW to support your learning.

You will be able to monitor your development and academic progress via the NOW and through the tutorial system. You will also be involved in QA processes through the Staff Student Liaison Meetings (SSLMs). These are where course representatives for each tutorial group across each subject area and both years meet in a formal setting to discuss a range of pertinent issues raised and led by students. SSLMs will be held three times a year and membership includes key members of management staff - Head of HE, Teaching and Learning, Student Services, IT, Technical, the Additional Learning Support Manager, subject leaders for all subject areas as well as a representative from the NTU collaborative partnership team. The information from the SSLMs is used in-year to make appropriate changes during the academic year.

In addition to learning support there is a dedicated course administrator in place for any appropriate support e.g. submission procedures, enrolment support, physical orientation etc.

You will be issued with both an electronic and paper version of the CICT Student Handbook. The Guide to Assessment and Feedback is shared electronically. The CICT handbook contains academic and student support information in line with university guidelines.

Your Course Handbook will contain details of the support available to you should there be an interruption in your studies, due to circumstances outside of your control, or through other factors affecting your academic performance. The School provides three options for requesting consideration and these are found in the section on Special Situations.

NTU and CICT are committed to assisting you to achieve the best results possible during your studies with us, providing a wide range of academic help and advice. A comprehensive learner support system is adopted by both institutes, which also can include input from the university and student union, and can be tailored to meet your needs.

### 13. Graduate destinations / employability

Academic Tutorials are designed to help focus your individual career plan. These sessions, designed by your tutors are supported by Careers Service. VFX Industry Practice module (delivered at NTU) will help align your own exit trajectory with the assignment work you will be completing during the course.

Employability will be an integral element of the course with training on the latest industry standard software and hardware combined with ample opportunities throughout the programme to undertake appropriate work based learning. The integration of problem solving and diagnostic testing and intensive tuition in increasingly complex software will increase your experience of creating and experimenting with a range of different pipelines and production processes so a confident, creative, innovative, technically savvy graduate is prepared with the new entrant skills demanded by the VFX industry.

Typical job roles in industry might include:

- Compositor
- Concept Artist
- Layout Artist (3D computer animation)
- Lighting Technical Director
- Match move artist
- Roto Artist
- VFX Supervisor
14. **Course standards and quality**

There are well-established systems for managing the quality of the curriculum within NTU and CICT. External examiners are appointed to each course and report on the appropriateness of the curriculum, the quality of student work and the assessment process.

CICT and NTU reviews, refines and updates its courses and modules with dialogue between staff and students an important part of this process. Whilst there are good informal relationships between staff and students, we also have formal channels for student feedback which comprise:

- Student/Staff Liaison Committee
- Formal module evaluation, undertaken by questionnaire
- Course Student Representatives, elected by the student group, represent students.

At the end of each year the course team at CICT write an evaluative Course Standards and Quality Report (CSQR) which is discussed by the School Academic Standards and Quality Committee (SASQC) for actions recommended. Your contribution to this process is important.

15. **Assessment regulations**

This course is subject to the University’s Common Assessment Regulations (located in Section 16 of the NTU Quality Handbook). Any course specific assessment features are described below:

There are no course specific assessment features

16. **Additional Information**

Collaborative partner(s): N/A

Course referenced to national QAA Benchmark Statements: Engineering.

Course recognised by: N/A

Date implemented: March 2015

Any additional information:

Key features of the course:

- Designed to provide graduates with the core skills required to work in VFX industry.
- Teaches advanced computer skills working with industry standard post production software combined with a detailed understanding of the mathematical and scientific principles that underpin this subject area.
- Programme is designed around employability – students develop industry facing skills combined with creativity, good communications and organisational skills.
- Integration of problem solving and diagnostic testing and intensive tuition in increasingly complex software will increase student’s experience of creating and experimenting with a range of different pipelines and production processes.