

UNIVERSITY FOR THE CREATIVE ARTS

PROGRAMME SPECIFICATION FOR:

BA (HONS) COMPUTER ANIMATION ARTS

PROGRAMME SPECIFICATION [ACADEMIC YEAR 2017/18]

*This Programme Specification is designed for prospective students, current students, academic staff and potential employers. It provides a concise summary of the main features of the programme and the intended learning outcomes that a typical student might reasonably be expected to achieve and demonstrate if he/she takes full advantage of the learning opportunities that are provided. More detailed information on the teaching, learning and assessment methods, learning outcomes and content of each unit can be found in the Unit Descriptors.*

## Section A – Material Course Information

Validating Body	University for the Creative Arts <sup>1</sup>	
Teaching Body	University for the Creative Arts	
Final Award Title and Type	BA (Hons)	
Course Title	Computer Animation Arts	
Course Location and Length	Campus: Rochester	Length: 3 Years
Period of Validation	2017/18 to 2021/22	
Name of Professional, Statutory or Regulatory Body	Not Applicable	
Type of Accreditation	Not Applicable	
<p>Entry criteria and requirements<sup>2</sup></p> <p>As the UK's highest-ranking creative arts university, we want to attract the best and most creative minds in the country – so we take a balanced approach to candidate assessment, taking both individual portfolios and exam results into account.</p> <p>That's why your portfolio is an especially important part of your application to study with us – and we can help. Our academics can offer you expert advice on how to showcase your creative work and build a portfolio that will make your application stand out. More advice on how to create an exceptional portfolio is also available <a href="#">here</a>, along with specific portfolio requirements for this course. Along with your portfolio, the standard entry requirements** for this course are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 112 new UCAS tariff points (equivalent to 280 old UCAS tariff points) from accepted qualifications*, or</li> <li>• Pass at Foundation Diploma in Art &amp; Design (Level 3 or 4), or</li> <li>• Distinction, Merit, Merit at BTEC Extended Diploma, or</li> <li>• Merit at UAL Extended Diploma, or</li> <li>• 112 new UCAS tariff points from an accredited Access to Higher Education Diploma in appropriate subject</li> </ul> <p>And four GCSE passes at grade A*-C and/or grade 4-9 including English (or Functional Skills English/Key Skills Communication Level 2)</p> <p>Other relevant and equivalent level 3 UK and international qualifications are considered on an individual basis, and we encourage students from diverse educational backgrounds apply.</p> <p>If your first language is not English, you will need an IELTS score of 6.0 or equivalent. If you require a visa to study in the UK, you will also need a minimum score of 5.5 in each individual component.</p>		

<sup>1</sup> Regulated by the Higher Education Funding Council for England

<sup>2</sup> This should be the standard University Criteria unless otherwise approved by the Academic Board and include UCAS entry profile for undergraduate courses.

*\*To see the accepted QCF qualifications, visit: <http://uca.ac.uk/study/accepted-qualifications/>*

*\*\* We occasionally make offers which are lower than the standard entry criteria, to students who have faced difficulties that have affected their performance and who were expected to achieve higher results. In these cases, a strong portfolio is especially helpful.*

Overall methods of assessment <sup>3</sup>	Written exams:	Practical exams:	Coursework:
Stage 1	0%	0%	100%
Stage 2	0%	0%	100%
Stage 3	0%	0%	100%
Overall Learning & Teaching hours <sup>4</sup>	Scheduled:	Independent:	Placement:
Stage 1	57.5%	42.5%	0.0%
Stage 2	45.8%	54.2%	0.0%
Stage 3	20.8%	79.2%	0.0%
General level of staff delivering the course <sup>5</sup>	The University's current recruitment policy for Lecturers and Senior Lecturers states that they must have either an MA or equivalent professional practice in a relevant discipline or field. All lecturing staff are encouraged to work towards a teaching qualification or professional Recognition by the Higher Education Academy and this is a requirement for Senior Lecturers. Senior Lecturers are required to be professionally active or engaged in research in their discipline. All Lecturers and Senior Lecturers undertake scholarship in their disciplines. There are also Sessional Staff to link courses with professional practice and Technicians to provide technical support.		
Mode of Study	Full-time	X	Part-time
Language of Study	English		
Subject/Qualification Benchmark Statement: QAA Art & Design			
Framework for Higher Education Qualifications (FHEQ)			

### The course structure

<sup>3</sup> As generated by the unit descriptors and calculated for the overall course stage data.

<sup>4</sup> As generated by the unit descriptors and calculated for the overall course stage data. Expressed as a percentage of total learning hours per stage.

<sup>5</sup> Include general information about the experience or status of the staff involved in delivering the course, for example Professor, Course Leader, Senior Lecturer

The structure of all of the University's awards complies with the University's Common Credit Framework. All students are registered for a particular award. Exit awards are available to students in line with 6.7 of the Common Credit Framework.

Unit codes and titles	Level	Credit value	Elective/ Core	Most popular student choice of optional elective units or elective options in core units?
Year 1				
RCAA4005 - Toolkit 1	4	30	Core	
RCAA4006 – Environment	4	30	Core	
RCAA4008 – Story	4	30	Core	
RCAA4007– Contexts	4	30	Core	
Year 2				
RCAA5010 – Collaboration	5	30	Elective	Yes
RCAA5011 – Collaboration (Study Abroad Option)	5	20	Elective	No
RCAA5008 –Toolkit 2	5	30	Elective	Yes
RCAA5009 –Toolkit 2 (Study Abroad Option)	5	20	Elective	No
RCAA5012 – Premise	5	30	Core	
RCAA5013 – Perspectives	5	30	Elective	Yes
RCAA5014 –Perspectives (Study Abroad Option)	5	20	Elective	No
Study Abroad with Host Institution	5	60	Elective	No
Year 3				
RCAA6005 – Minor	6	30	Elective	Yes
RCAA6006 – Major	6	60	Core	
RCAA6007 - Thesis	6	30	Elective	Yes
RCAA6008 – Extended Thesis	6	60	Elective	No

## Section B - Course Overview

With its emphasis on design, story and software training, students of *Computer Animation Arts* graduate as dextrous, professional creatives in both 2D and 3D workflows for computer animation. Skills-based units engender industry-level proficiency across a range of software suites, while challenging production design and narrative-based projects ensure technology is applied creatively and always in the service of story.

Level 4 introduces the creative pipeline, beginning with ideation, concept art and production design, followed by scriptwriting and pre-visualisation for animation, and sound design. Level 4 culminates with students pre-producing, producing and post-producing their first computer-generated animation. Level 4's *Toolkit 1* unit encompasses 3D software training, life-drawing, and the principles of animation. The *Contexts* component sensitises students to the many ways in which computer animation situates within established

frameworks of cultural theory. Weekly film screenings further support and contextualise students' creative practice.

Level 5 emphasises collaboration and enhanced professionalism, with students working in teams to pre-produce, produce, post-produce and promote an original animated short. Students are next challenged to identify the premise and pipeline of their proposed Level 6 project and engage in intensive story-development and pre-production. The *Perspectives* component enhances further student's awareness of theoretical frameworks and their relations to their creative practice and facilitates their proposals for their Level 6 Thesis. Level 5's *Toolkit 2* unit encompasses advanced 3D modelling techniques, character design for animation, and pipelines for computer animation. Weekly film screenings further support and contextualise students' creative practice.

Level 6 comprises a Minor and Major project and Thesis. The Minor and Major project are separated in name, but less so in practice. While it is always possible for a student to conclude a single project within the timeframe of the Minor project and commence a different project for their Major, many students distribute the production of a single film across both units.

A student may elect to undertake the *Extended Thesis* option, in which case their Level 6 would comprise the Extended Thesis and a Major Project.

*Computer Animation Arts* is further characterised by its use of blogs and blogging. All CAA students have an individual blog, which facilitates our 'community of practice' and fosters a culture of timely, formative feedback, habitual reflection, peer review, mentoring and professionalism.

CAA graduates are generalists with the talent and skillsets to specialise. Think of them as 'Swiss Army Knives' – fit-for-purpose, adaptable, problem-solving, resilient and extraordinarily *useful*.

Course website: [www.computeranimationarts.com](http://www.computeranimationarts.com)

Course blog: <http://ucarochester-cgartsandanimation.blogspot.co.uk>

## Section C - Course Aims

A1 to develop creative, adaptive professionals with industry-level skillsets.

A2 to develop critical, intellectual, creative and practical abilities in the production of computer animation.

A3 to utilise and engage with critical and theoretical debates in relation to computer generated imagery and its relationship to wider cultural contexts.

A3 to engage professionally in teamwork and sustained independent study.

A4 to achieve professional skillsets.

A5 to facilitate progression towards professional careers or postgraduate studies.

## Section D - Course Outcomes

Upon successful completion of the course students are able to:

#### Knowledge

LO1 demonstrate professional knowledge of creative methodologies for the pre-production, production and post-production of computer animation.

LO2 demonstrate academic literacy in regards to theoretical frameworks and cultural contexts as they associate with computer animation.

LO3 demonstrate expert knowledge of software suites in application to computer animation.

#### Understanding

LO4 employ professional skills in the application of software suites to computer animation.

LO5 identify and employ professional creative methodologies for the production of computer animation.

LO6 define career aims and develop innovative self-initiated project work professionally.

#### Application

LO7 demonstrate independent learning and sustained creative practice.

LO8 engage with advanced creative methodologies.

LO9 demonstrate professional application of software suites.

LO10 demonstrate expert project management and professionalism.

### Section E - Learning, Teaching and Assessment

#### Learning and Teaching Strategy

The community-building pedagogies characterising the design and delivery of *Computer Animation Arts* are influential within UCA and more widely. The course use of blogs and blogging by which to foster an inclusive culture of formative feedback is identified as a model of best practice by the University and adopted by a number of other courses here and elsewhere. Research undertaken into CAA's community of practice has since been disseminated in two publications:

- *Community and contribution: Factors motivating students to participate in an extra-curricular online activity and implications for learning*, Gomm, Phil, Reeves, Tony, Sage Journals, February 2015
- *Blogging All Over The World: Can Blogs Enhance Student Engagement By Creating A Community Of Practice Around A Course?* Gomm, Phil, Reeves, Tony, Emerald, 2012.

Examples of the effectiveness of our learning and teaching strategy can be summarised as:

- All CAA students have an individual course blog. All CAA students are encouraged to follow every other student's blog. In this way, mentoring between year groups becomes habitual and students are able to situate their learning within the context of the complete three-year experience.
- Blogging 'little and often' and thereby soliciting feedback proactively from tutors and peers aligns with professional practices and 'studio' culture, wherein ideas are critiqued quickly with the expectation that more ideas will follow and that it's 'not personal'. Surviving criticism and resilience are further characteristics of CAA's creative community.
- All projects include an OGR requirement (Online Greenlight Review) wherein students upload interim presentations of their project work by which to solicit formative feedback. The course's emphasis on OGRs assists students in regards to their project management and ensures feedback is timely and constructive.
- CAA is largely paperless, both in terms of course materials and student assessment. Students submit to – and present from – their respective blogs, with project documentation embedded as viewable documents and video content hosted on Vimeo and/or Youtube. Course materials are disseminated via UCA's VLE – myUCA and CAA's exclusive CG Artist's Toolkit website.
- The Post With The Most is a monthly tutor's pick of work from the creative community of *Computer Animation Arts* – it is emailed out to an industry mail list and also goes out to current, former and prospective students.

Visit <http://ucarochester-cgartsandanimation.blogspot.co.uk/search/label/PWTM>

- Where possible, CAA facilitates work placements at the end of the academic year for Level 5 students.
- The CAA course team is especially sensitised to issues of inclusivity, equality and diversity, as historically, the CAA community is widely neuro-diverse. The CL works very closely with UCA's Learning and Student Support managers and staff. In delivery terms, CAA seeks to engender inclusivity in a number of simple ways:
  - Online Video Tutorials available 24/7 via course-specific tutorial website.
  - All briefings are recorded and audio made available via myUCA.
  - All theory lectures are recorded and audio made available via myUCA.
  - All theory and briefing slides (Years 1 & 2) made available at outset of unit.
  - All projects have formative feedback milestones, interim crits or OGRS.
  - All projects are aligned with 'best practice' examples from previous year groups profiled on the course's group blog.
  - First years are mentored by year 2 and year 3 students, and alumni.
  - A culture of 'academic literacy' is established from the outset in Year 1 via short weekly written exercises – blog-based reviews of the film programme. No word count is given, but reviews are required to adhere to academic conventions. The reviews represent weekly opportunities for students to 'get things wrong or right' and formative feedback on their reviews help them to grow in confidence and skill. By the end of term 1, students are writing academically literate critique aligned with ideas, not word counts.

#### Assessment Strategy

CAA's strategy for assessment is predicated upon a culture of timely, constructive formative feedback facilitated by a learning culture of high-visibility, low walls and a professionalised relationship to soliciting critique - and receiving it.

In regards to inclusivity, the course seeks to equalise the perceived 'differences' between students and their learning styles by fostering a suitably supportive culture enabling them to develop the means by which they can engage successfully with the expectations of undergraduate education and the published aims of the course. In this way, the course aligns professionalism with inclusivity – i.e. that life-long inclusivity is best engendered by giving students the fullest range of modes possible by which they might meet the likely challenges of the actual workplace. To assess against criteria confidently, a course must be sure that it is first making every effort to counter the blind spots of its cohorts. Standards of academic literacy, for example, can only be asked for and assessed against with confidence, if academic literacy is being taught effectively and all students given continuing opportunities to inhabit this mode of expression. The course team is confident that CAA's curricula is as levelling as it is challenging.

CAA's typical assessment is as follows:

- All summative assessment is preceded by regular formative assessment.
- Summative assessments take the form of crit presentations – students presenting their work to their peers and tutors in the formalised setting of a lecture theatre or similar. These summative presentations are preceded by formative presentations and/or Online Reviews.
- Level 5 group project assessment includes peer assessment, whereby group members are required to complete assessment proformas and mark each other against criteria accordingly. At all crit presentations, peers are invited to feedback and it's common for second and third years to attend year one crit presentations.
- In every unit, a learning outcome aligns with project-management and professionalism. This allows us to address issues arising from the *way* in which students develop projects and create work, as distinct from the merits or otherwise of a project's outcome. Attendance, punctuality, modes of address, presentation skills and communication can all be addressed with confidence by the course in the knowledge these expectations are constituents of employability and professionalism.
- Student blogs are all assessed as they align with professionalism – so not simply as platforms for finished work, but as online professional spaces.

## Section F - Enhancing the Quality of Learning and Teaching

The course is subject to the University's rigorous quality assurance procedures which involve subject specialist and internal peer review of the course at periodic intervals, normally of 5 years. This process ensures that the course engages with the national Subject Benchmarks in Art & Design and references the Framework for Higher Education Qualifications.

All courses are monitored on an annual basis where consideration is given to:

- External Examiner's Reports
- Key statistics including data on retention and achievement
- Results of the Student Satisfaction Surveys
- Feedback from Student Course Representative



