MA Visual Effects Production (Compositing); MA Visual Effects Production (3D)

Please note: This specification provides a concise summary of the main features of the programme and the learning outcomes that a typical student might reasonably be expected to achieve and demonstrate if they complete the programme successfully. Further information on the learning outcomes, content and teaching, learning and assessment methods of each module can be found in the Module Specifications and Programme Handbook.

PART A: PROGRAMME INFORMATION

1.	**Awarding Body**	Coventry University
2.	**Teaching Institution**	Escape Studios
3.	**School responsible for the programme**	School of Animation & Visual Effects
4.	**Name of Final Award(s)**	MA Visual Effects Production (Compositing) MA Visual Effects Production (3D) PG Diploma Visual Effects Production (Compositing) PG Diploma Visual Effects Production (3D) PG Certificate Visual Effects Production
5.	**Available Exit Award(s)**	PG Diploma Visual Effects Production (Compositing) PG Diploma Visual Effects Production (3D) PG Certificate Visual Effects Production
6.	**FHEQ Level(s) of Qualification**	Level 7
7.	**Total Credits/ ECTS Value**	MA 180 credits (90 ECTS) PG Dip 120 credits (60 ECTS) PG Cert 60 credits (30 ECTS)
8.	**External Accrediting Body and date of accreditation**	N/A
9.	**Mode(s) of Study and Duration(s)**	Full-time / online
10.	**Teaching Site(s)**	Escape Studios London
11.	**Relevant QAA Subject Benchmark Statement(s) if applicable**	N/A
12.	**Date of Approval/ Revision**	June 2023/ March 2025
13.	**Version number**	V2
14.	**Effective From**	September 2025

PART B: CONTEXT, DESIGN AND DELIVERY

15. **Programme Context**

This programme has been designed through close consultation with industry professionals and is based on over 20 years' experience of delivering highly focused educational programmes for the visual effects industry. A block delivery model was devised to ensure that the students could focus on either craft or project work, and to make those projects feel like real industry projects. Escape Studios' (ES) existing pedagogy was adapted to incorporate elements of project-based delivery. Escape Studios' connection with the industry, combined with the expert instruction from existing tutors provides a powerful and practical student learning experience.

The assessment methods employed in this programme have been developed to mirror industry practice as far as possible. We balance feedback from tutors and industry experts. It is crucial that students learn how to accept and work with feedback from their superiors and peers, as this will be the norm when they work in industry. They also need to develop a keen self-critical eye. To be able to step back from their work and see what they could improve, and to have the ability look at themselves and their working practices and make changes where necessary.

Graduates of the programme will be ready for work. They will have a deep technical knowledge of their craft and will have the ability to work collaboratively with people in adjacent roles and fields.

16. **Inclusivity in Programme Design**

Escape Studios is committed to inclusivity and recognises and has embedded the expectations of current equality legislation by ensuring that this programme is as accessible as possible by design.

17. **Programme Aims**

The past decade has seen a rapid expansion in the use of computer-based imagery in the generation of film, television, interactive entertainment and computer games. Hardly any piece of visual media is produced today that has not at some time been manipulated by a computer. The need for well-qualified professionals to take a lead in developing and exploiting existing and new computer graphics technologies will continue to grow with this widespread use.

This programme of study is delivered by Escape Studios, who been delivering training to the industry for more than 20 years with great success, and as such have considerable links with the visual effects industry.

The scope of this field is increasing rapidly in terms of both technology and applications, and it is increasingly difficult to develop these areas to an advanced level within the constraints of existing undergraduate programmes. This postgraduate programme has been developed to focus on visual effects, extending the knowledge and skills of graduates from undergraduate programmes from degrees from other institutions.

This postgraduate programme of study aims to enable students to develop, at advanced level, knowledge, skill and understanding within the field of visual effects, and to equip them to become a well-qualified professional able to take a lead in developing and exploiting existing and emerging visual effects technologies. The unique nature of this programme means that students will study under the supervision of tutors with industrial experience and with industry standard tools and technology. Their major projects will involve professional briefs and assets set in consultation with industry partners.

The aim of the programme is to provide opportunities for students to apply specialist skills and knowledge across specific areas of visual effects, and to demonstrate critical judgment, research ability and proficiency in project management.

The programme aims to:

- Provide a supportive, structured environment in which students are encouraged to further develop independent learning skills in a studio environment;
- Develop deep level subject knowledge and understanding, discipline skills and personal transferable skills;
- Enhance employability by developing a skillset focused on industry and with support to develop their personal portfolio.

The programme has two pathways: 3D and Compositing. This allows students to choose the area of visual effects that they wish to build a career in. Students initially follow a common path and after two modules choose the 3D or Compositing route for the next two modules before coming back together for the final project.

18. Stage Learning Outcomes

18.1. Stage One Learning Outcomes (all pathways)

On completion of stage one, students on all pathways will be able to:

1. Demonstrate a knowledge and understanding of the theory and concepts behind the use of 3D software tools for visual effects; [3D-A10]

2. Demonstrate a knowledge and understanding of the theory and concepts behind the use of compositing software tools for visual effects; [CP-A01]

3. Critically evaluate and select 3D software tools and techniques for visual effects production; [3D-B12]

4. Critically evaluate and select compositing software tools and techniques for visual effects production; [CP-B03]

5. Create 3D content for use in a visual effects shot using professional tool and techniques. [3D-C14]

6. Composite computer-generated 3D objects into a still image; [3D-C15]

7. Composite content for use in a visual effects shot using professional tool and techniques; [CP-C05]

8. Communicate complex creative and technical information to a variety of audiences; [CP-D08] [3D-D18]

9. Apply high-level skills to deliver a complex visual effects project; [CP-C06] [3D-C16]

10. Manage complex processes and tasks to deliver a project to a defined brief; [CP-D07] [3D-D17]

18.2. Stage One Learning Outcomes (Compositing pathway)

In addition to the common pathway learning outcomes, on completion of Stage 1 students on the Compositing pathway will be able to:

11. Demonstrate knowledge and understanding of the emerging theory, techniques and approaches for compositing for a visual effects production; [CP-A02]

12. Critically evaluate and select compositing techniques needed to complete a complex visual effects production project; [CP-B04]

18.3. Stage One Learning Outcomes (3D pathway)

In addition to the common pathway Stage 1 learning outcomes, on completion of Stage 1 students on the 3D pathway will be able to:

13. Demonstrate knowledge and understanding of the emerging theory, techniques and approaches for 3D visual effects production; [3D-A11]

14. Critically evaluate and select 3D the visual effects techniques needed to complete a complex production project; [3D-B14]

19. <u>Programme Learning Outcomes</u>

MA learning outcomes (all pathways)

On completion of all pathways, graduates will be able to:

15. Technically and critically analyse and solve problems in the absence of full information and under conditions of uncertainty. [CP-B21] [3D-B29]

16. Organise and manage a project within a professional production pipeline; [CP-C23] [3D-C31]

17. Organise and schedule resources effectively to a high standard. [CP-D15] [3D-D32]

18. Communicate complex technical and creative information in a structured and effective way to a variety of audiences. [CP-D26] [3D-D33]

19. Demonstrate advanced practical abilities in the implementation of a collaborative project; [CP-D09] [3D-D19]

In addition to the common pathway learning outcomes, on successful completion of the MA (Compositing), a graduate will be able to:

20. Demonstrate knowledge and understanding of the potential advancements in visual effects compositing and their impact on the production process. [CP-A20]

21. Research and critically evaluate the emerging theory and practice in the field of visual effects compositing. [CP-B22]

22. Implement a complex visual effects compositing production to a professional standard. [CP-C24]

In addition to the common pathway learning outcomes, on successful completion of the MA (3D), a graduate will be able to:

23. Demonstrate knowledge and understanding of the potential advancements in 3D visual effects and their impact on the production process. [3D-A27]

24. Research and critical evaluation of emerging theory and practice in the field of 3D visual effects. [3D-B28]

25. Implement a complex 3D visual effects production to a professional standard. [3D-C30]

20.   Programme Structure

The programme covers a range of specialist topics, leading to the qualification of a Master's degree. This includes four classroom-based modules and a major project including collaborative working.

The programme is divided into two stages. Stage1 comprises modules to a total of 120 credits and Stage2 comprises a 60 credit Visual Effects Production Project module. Students must successfully complete each module in order to be awarded the specified number of credits for that module. One credit corresponds to approximately ten hours of 'learning time' (including all classes and all private study and research). Thus obtaining 180 credits in an academic year requires 1,800 hours of overall learning time.

Stage 1 has two pathways, one specialising in 3D and one specialising in Compositing. After studying two common modules that introduce students to 3D and Composting in a professional VFX context, students choose sets of two optional modules on that define their chosen pathway. The modules in each pathway of Stage 1 are delivered sequentially, with the contact time of each module being completed before the next module begins.

Each module and programme is designed to be at level 7.

To be eligible for the award of a Master's degree students must obtain 180 credits, at least 150 of which must be Level 7. Students who obtain 60 credits (excluding the Production Project) will be eligible for the award of Postgraduate Certificate in Visual Effects Production. Students who obtain 120 credits, but excluding the Production Project, will be eligible for the award of Postgraduate Diploma Visual Effects Production (Compositing) or Visual Effects Production (3D).

Where a student fails a module(s) due to illness or other mitigating circumstances, such failure may be condoned, subject to the requirements of the Credit Framework and provided that the student has achieved the programme learning outcomes.

Where a student fails a module(s),but has marks for such modules within 10 percentage points of the pass mark, the Board of Examiners may nevertheless award the credits for the module(s), subject to the requirements of the Credit Framework and provided that the student has achieved the programme learning outcomes. For further information refer to the Credit Framework.

The following modules may not be condoned or compensated:

Compositing 1, Compositing 2, 3D Foundation, Visual Effects, Production Project

This programme has flexible start dates which may vary from year to year. There will typically be one start date in the Autumn, which will usually be in August, September or October and another at the start of the calendar year, which will usually be in January or February.

Code	Module Title	Requirement	Level	Credits
Stage 1				
Core Modules: All pathways				
EXVX7001	3D Foundation	Mandatory	7	30
EXVX7004	Compositing 1	Mandatory	7	30
Core Modules: Compositing pathway				
EXVX7005	Compositing 2	Mandatory	7	30
EXVX7007	Advanced Compositing for Visual Effects	Mandatory	7	30
Core Modules: 3D pathway				
EXVX7002	Visual Effects	Mandatory	7	30
EXVX7006	Advanced 3D for Visual Effects	Mandatory	7	30
Stage 2				
Core Modules: All pathways				
EXPR7004	Production Project	Mandatory	7	60

21.　Learning, Teaching and Assessment Strategy

21.1.　Learning and Teaching Methods

The programmes are built around a logical series of intensive learning experiences, each of which are structured as specific modules. These are either *Craft-focused* or *Project-focused*. Students are expected to be engaged in their study whether it be in studio/class full-time or as independent directed study, full time, just like in a professional studio.

Tutors lead the *Craft* modules, supporting students developing their knowledge, understanding and skill to enable them to create high-quality visual effects. This is where the students initially gain most of their knowledge and subject specific theory and skills and setting this in context, and the environment fosters an apprentice-like experience, learning from and working with master craftsmen. The focus here is on the individual and their skills, with feedback coming from tutors, peers, and self-reflection.

Tutors and industry professionals lead the *Project* modules, giving students the chance to work on projects to a professional brief, put their skills to practice, and collaborate through a production or development pipeline. These modules are the primary way that the intellectual and transferable skills are developed. The focus here is on the individual's role in a larger collaborative brief, whether that be a student team project or in the context of a wider collaborative environment. Feedback comes from tutors, peers, self- reflection, and the industry. These Projects are generally divided into three phases: concept, making, and retrospective.

Delivery Modes

Skills Sessions

Tutor-led, intensive periods in the classroom where students learn the theory and technical skills that are essential for their specific craft. These sessions are very practical, with students following demonstrations and working on tutor-defined exercises to develop their theoretical understanding and skills of their craft, providing a strong link between theory and practice. Such is the complexity of the software used in the creation of visual effects that we have refined this effective and efficient way of supporting students to gain mastery of their subject.

Tutorials

These are tutor-led sessions that are not focused on technical skills, but on developing subject specific knowledge and broad transferable competencies. These include discussions and presentations around key theories, critical reflection and feedback activities (dailies and notes), team building & group dynamics workshops, and pastoral elements.

Tutorials will be held with the entire cohort, working groups, or on a 1-to-1 basis, as appropriate.

Studio Time

Practical, open, and largely collaborative periods in the studio, where students work on individual assignments or group projects without tutor intervention. Generally, there will be a studio assistant available to support with technical issues, but these are periods where students learn how to apply their lessons from the Skills Sessions to an industry-appropriate challenge or brief.

Self-Directed

For the remaining time students will manage their own learning process. Working on individual or group projects as is appropriate, following the recommended reading, implementing tutor recommendations from 1-to-1 tutorials, or pursuing side projects for personal and professional development.

Dailies / Notes

Success in the creative industries depends on regular and effective critical feedback on work-in-progress. During Craft and Project modules tutors and teams will run regular group sessions where individuals can get peer feedback from creative and technical points of view. This will be regular, constructive, and formative, supporting students to produce the best quality work possible before the summative assessment points at the end of modules.

Retrospectives (Retros)

The term is borrowed from agile production methods and is essentially a designated period for reflection and analysis. Students will take part in retros, reflecting as individuals and through group discussion on the work produced and the module as a whole. They will explain and discuss their lessons and define actions they will take in future work. Retros play an important role in students developing a keen understanding of themselves, how they work, what their role is in teams, and how they can improve their practice.

21.2. Assessment Methods

Assessment is based on practical project work and a written record of this work, along with documentation and presentation of their research and investigation. These methods are chosen so that students may demonstrate the learning outcomes of each module which are focused on the research skills, decision-making and process implementation involved in successful project completion.

22. <u>Programme Regulations and Requirements</u>

This Programme is subject to the Academic Regulations of Escape Studios. No derogations apply.

PART C: ADMISSIONS

23. **Admissions Requirements**

23.1. **Admissions Criteria**

All applicants are expected to have:

- an Honours Degree containing a significant component in the field of animation or related discipline of an approved degree-awarding body;

OR

- equivalent industrial experience in the field of animation or a related area.

Applicants will be expected to submit a portfolio of work to be assessed and attend an interview that will be carried out by members of the teaching team.

Escape Studios' (ES) recruitment and admissions policies are founded on the principles of selection according to merit and equality of opportunity. On selecting students, equitable consideration will be given to all candidates. ES will make reasonable adjustments to allow applicants and students to access recruitment and outreach events and the application process. For further information on this, potential applicants are encouraged to refer to the Additional Learning Needs Policy, which may be found on the ES website.

ES welcomes applications from people of all backgrounds and abilities. Those with a disability are encouraged to discuss the nature of their disability with the Programme during the application process. ES has a process to assess additional learning needs, providing support and where appropriate 'reasonable adjustments' in assessment.

23.2. **Language Requirements**

Students who do not have English as a first language will need to demonstrate their proficiency with appropriate qualifications or evidence of having been taught English previously. Typical English Language Level: average 6.5 IELTs, minimum 6.0 reading and writing.

23.3. **Accreditation of Prior Learning**

Applications for Accreditation of Prior Learning (APL) will be considered in accordance with the Escape Studios (ES) Academic Regulations and Admissions Policy, available on the ES website.

PART D: EXTERNAL CONTEXT

24. **Reference points used when designing this Programme:**
- QAA UK Quality Code for Higher Education (2018)
- QAA The Frameworks for Higher Education Qualifications of UK Degree-Awarding Bodies (2014)
- QAA Higher Education Credit Framework for England (2021)
- SEEC 2021 Credit Level Descriptors for Higher Education
- Escape Studios Academic Regulations
- Escape Studios Academic Strategy
- Escape Studios Learning, Teaching and Assessment Strategy

Appendix One: Mapping of Learning Outcomes to Modules and Assessments

Learning Outcomes		MA (3D)				
		3D Foundation EXVX7001	Comp 1 EXVX7004	Visual Effects EXVX7002	Adv 3D for VFX EXVX006	Production Project EXVX7003
Stage One	1	X				
	2		X			
	3	X				
	4		X			
	5	X				
	6	X				
	7		X			
	8	X				
	9			X	X	
	10				X	
	13			X	X	
	14			X	X	
Additional Stage Two	15					X
	16					X
	17					X
	18					X
	19					X
	23					X
	24					X
	25					X

Learning Outcomes		MA (Compositing)				
		3D Foundation EXVX7001	Comp1 EXVX700	Comp 2 EXVX7005	Adv Comp for VFX EXVX7007	Production Project EXVX7003
Stage One	1	X				
	2		X	X		
	3	X				
	4		X	X		
	5	X				
	6	X				
	7		X	X		
	8	X				
	9				X	
	10				X	
	11				X	
	12				X	
Additional Stage Two	15					X
	16					X
	17					X
	18					X
	19					X
	20					X
	21					X
	22					X