

## COURSE SPECIFICATION

**Awarding Body:** Norwich University of the Arts

The University is a recognised body with taught degree awarding powers. The University is subject to regulation by the [Office for Students](#) (OfS).

**Course Title:** BA (Hons) VFX

**Level of Study:** Level 6 of the Framework for Higher Education Qualifications in England (FHEQ).

For further information see:

<http://www.qaa.ac.uk/en/Publications/Documents/qualifications-frameworks.pdf>

**Award:** Bachelor Degree with Honours (BA (Hons))

**Mode of Study:** Full-time

**Duration of Course:** 3 years

**Language of Study:** English

**Course Accreditation:** None

**Relevant QAA Subject Benchmarks:** Art and Design (2008)

Subject Benchmark Statements set out expectations about standards of degrees in a range of subject areas. They describe what gives a discipline its coherence and identity, and define what can be expected of a graduate in terms of the abilities and skills needed to develop understanding or competence in the subject.

For further information see [https://www.qaa.ac.uk/docs/qaa/subject-benchmark-statements/sbs-art-and-design-17.pdf?sfvrsn=71eef781\\_16](https://www.qaa.ac.uk/docs/qaa/subject-benchmark-statements/sbs-art-and-design-17.pdf?sfvrsn=71eef781_16)

**Tuition Fees:** For details of tuition fees see: <http://www.nua.ac.uk/study/finance/>

**Other Course Costs:** The cost of materials for producing course work is not included in the tuition fee. Due to the choice and diversity it is not possible to generalise about the costs that you might incur. On average students of arts, design and media courses spend around £250 in their first year rising to £375 in their second year and £600 in their graduating year.

The course may also offer an opportunity to attend one or more study visits. These visits are not compulsory and costs vary depending on the location and duration of the study visit.

For details see: <https://www.nua.ac.uk/wp-content/uploads/2018/01/VFX-Indicative-course-costs.pdf>

## **ADMISSION REQUIREMENTS**

### **Entry Requirements / Interview / Portfolio**

When you apply to BA (Hons) VFX at NUA, we will ask you to prepare your portfolio, a written submission and an interview. These methods are used to assess your suitability to the course. All three elements should clearly demonstrate your passion for the subject and your individual creativity.

Detailed information regarding entry requirements and portfolio guidance can be found here <https://www.nua.ac.uk/study-at-nua/courses/ba-hons-vfx/>

## **AIMS AND OUTCOMES OF UNDERGRADUATE STUDY**

### **The Aims of Undergraduate Study are to:**

- Provide students with an inclusive and stimulating curriculum for the specialist study of art, design, architecture and media.
- Maintain and nurture a commitment to intellectual and personal development as a basis for a lifetime of learning and professional practice.
- Provide students with opportunities for innovative, imaginative and intellectually rigorous opportunities for creative practice along with skills appropriate to the named award.
- To enable students to establish and develop key skills in areas of creative practice, research and professional practice as they apply to the subject.
- Provide students with the required practical and project management skills to realise ideas.
- Provide courses that prepare students for employment and professional practice and/or further study.
- Provide courses that enable graduates to make a useful contribution to the social, economic and cultural life of the region and beyond.
- Enrich curriculum content and ensure course currency through the professional practice, research and scholarship of staff.
- Emphasise the cultural, technical and vocational relevance of course provision.
- Develop effective collaborations with the creative and cultural industries, professional bodies, other HEIs and wider art, design, architecture and media communities.

## **GENERIC SKILLS**

### **Holders of Undergraduate Awards will:**

- Have developed the skills to embark on a professional career or further course of study in a related field.
- Demonstrate a professional approach and work towards achieving their full potential as a creative or technical practitioner.
- Possess the qualities and transferable skills necessary for employment and progression to other qualifications assuming personal responsibility and decision-making.
- Be digitally literate in relation to the skills essential for professional practice and its representations.
- Be able to locate their work within relevant professional, cultural and historical frameworks.
- Be able to practice professionally in an area appropriate to their subject skills and expertise.

- Have developed the capacity to critically examine the context within which their practice is based.
- Be able to analyse information and experience to formulate and present reasoned arguments.
- Have an understanding of the extent of their knowledge, and how this influences analysis and interpretation based on that knowledge in their area of practice.
- Be able to interpret and communicate their practice using spoken, written and visual language.
- Be able to work flexibly to manage change and uncertainty.
- Be able to work independently and collaboratively while having regard to the views and needs of other stakeholders
- Have developed the ability to make effective use of processes and materials appropriate to the subject.
- Be able to work with due regard to Health and Safety, Ethics, Sustainability and Risk Assessment considerations as they apply in a range of professional contexts.

## COURSE DIAGRAM

<b>BA1a: Fundamentals</b>	<b>BA1b: Concepts and Contexts</b>
40 Credits	80 Credits
10 Weeks	20 Weeks

<b>BA2a: Experimentation and Application</b>	<b>BA2b: Collaboration</b>
80 Credits	40 Credits
20 Weeks	10 Weeks

<b>BA3a: Research and Development</b>	<b>BA3b: Resolution and Innovation</b>
60 Credits	60 Credits
15 Weeks	15 Weeks

## WHAT YOU WILL BE DOING IN THIS UNIT

This unit is your first step towards immersion into learning in Higher Education, which may be different to what you are used to, so you'll find you are encouraged to be more independent in your learning and improve your planning and reflective capabilities as you progress.

You'll do this by starting to gain fundamental skills and principles in VFX "world building". Before you start building believable worlds, you need to observe the one we live in and learn from its appearance! You also need to understand the nature of the digital environment of pixels and light that you will be working in from now on. So this unit gives you a bedrock of VFX fundamentals about lenses, pixels and light, and how they combine to make successful illusions.

You'll be shown a number of ways to maximise your learning and get the most out of the course. You'll be shown what a Reflective Journal is, and learn how to research effectively. Units, projects and the curriculum will be explained so you can start the course with confidence.

The VFX theme for this year is **Look Analyse and Resolve**, and you'll encounter this methodology as you work through the year. You'll begin with looking, and trying to analyse what you see, and then replicate or resolve it, to make your images believable.

The projects in this unit complement each other. They all coalesce in giving you the fundamentals you need to successfully pass this unit.

You'll start to build a repertoire of simple techniques from using the most rudimentary of materials- light and lens, to build up surprisingly complex images that will test your imagination and fool the eye.

<b>Unit Title:</b>	Fundamentals
<b>Reference:</b>	BA1a
<b>Year:</b>	1
<b>Credit Points:</b>	40
<b>Duration:</b>	10 Weeks
<b>Study Time:</b>	400 Hours

### Description

This unit will introduce you to the fundamental elements of your course and help you to become accustomed to undergraduate study at the University. Becoming an independent learner is an essential aspect of undergraduate study and this unit is designed to help you make the transition successfully by developing skills in planning, researching and reflection.

Within the unit you will be given opportunities to acquire essential practical skills relevant to your subject using an appropriate range of materials and processes. You will develop ways for generating ideas for your creative practice and consider how to progress them towards resolution. Along with your creative development you will be introduced to historical, cultural and ethical concepts that have influenced (and are influenced by) creative practice.

You will be introduced to methods for gathering information and supported to find relevant interpretations of your research. You will also be given the opportunity to develop skills of communication through writing, image and spoken word.

### Indicative Syllabus

The syllabus below indicates topics within each of the three Areas of Study outlined in the NUA Award and Credit Scheme for this unit.

#### Creative Practice

- Technical skills
- Ideas generation
- Knowledge of materials and processes
- Time management
- Documentation of practice
- Reflection on learning

#### Professional Practice

- Introduction to the Learning Environment, Health and Safety and Risk Assessment
- Audience awareness
- Communication and presentation skills
- Personal planning

#### Research

- Writing for creative practice
- Interchange between practice and theory

As you gain greater knowledge of the building blocks of creative compositing in VFX, you'll research some of the historical antecedents that have already trodden on the path you are starting on- people like R.W. Paul and Georges Méliès. You'll create phenomena the same way as some of the pioneers of VFX, who, in a pre-digital age, relied on inventive ideas, imagination and tricks of the light.

Simultaneously, whilst exploring ways of creating imagery, you'll start to engage with simple pixel operations through your work in the labs that will extend your understanding of digital creativity.

- Underlying subject histories and theories
- Visual and textual research skills
- Techniques of analysis and enquiry

### Aims

The aims of the unit are:

- To introduce you to the learning environment for undergraduate study in art, design and media.
- To foster an awareness of the importance of research and to enable you to experience key methods of gathering and interpreting information.
- To develop practical, technical and conceptual skills in your subject.
- To develop your understanding of the subject and related contemporary practice in the creative industries.

### Learning Outcomes

Upon successful completion of this unit, you will be able to:

- LO1:** Show an awareness of the fundamental historical, cultural and ethical concepts and principles associated with your subject.
- LO2:** Demonstrate the skills required for researching, interpreting and presenting fundamental ideas and theories around your subject.
- LO3:** Demonstrate a fundamental understanding of the materials and processes associated with your subject area.
- LO4:** Communicate the development and outcomes of your work clearly and effectively to others.

### Assessment Requirements

You are required to submit the following for assessment:

- A Body of creative work
- Research and supporting documentation
- A Reflective Journal
- A 1,000 word written text

## WHAT YOU WILL BE DOING IN THIS UNIT

You will be building on some of the initial investigations you made into both VFX concepts and further adapting to Higher Education learning in this unit, increasing your range of techniques and the ability to reflect, evaluate and add complexity to what you are doing, both independently and in a team.

In this unit you make an important transition in your work from making two-dimensional flat imagery towards testing notions of 3D virtual space, and raising issues and forming concepts of what this might mean for the viewer and the VFX artist alike. You'll be introduced to important new VFX industry standard terms and you'll start to develop a system and a style of your own to reach your audience as the Unit progresses. You'll learn to sift, select and cull ideas from your repertoire whilst expanding others. You will be given more responsibility to organize your time as the Unit progresses. It's easy to think 20 weeks is a long time and to delay important creative decisions, but in this unit you'll start to explore how efficient planning and time management will accelerate your productivity and make your creative ideas happen!

You will research and borrow ideas and concepts from a variety of sources including theories of perspective, theatrical stagecraft, monumental and civic art, sci-fi films, architecture and photography and apply these to make your VFX more robust and convincing. The VFX theme of the first year is Look Analyse and Resolve, and your early experiments will be refined as you analyse how your images are working and seek to improve them. With your tutors' guidance you'll work in teams to try out different arrangements and

<b>Unit Title:</b>	Concepts and Contexts
<b>Reference:</b>	BA1b
<b>Year:</b>	1
<b>Credit Points:</b>	80
<b>Duration:</b>	20 Weeks
<b>Study Time:</b>	800 Hours

### Description

This unit will provide you with a framework to support your continuing engagement with the concepts and contexts surrounding your subject. The unit will help you to develop approaches for independent learning, self-reflection, evaluation and documentation. As the unit progresses you will be able to apply the knowledge and skills you have acquired through a process of experimentation and analysis. You will explore techniques, materials and media in a variety of ways and be engaged in an investigation of the apparent and less obvious connections between ideas, images, objects, words and theories that surround your subject.

Successfully working as part of a team is an essential element of professional practice and you will be supported to develop this ability within the unit as you work towards a group presentation. You will be encouraged to gain insights into the industries associated with your subject and to consider the market and audience for your work.

The unit supports you to develop research skills in gathering information, analysis and communication and you will continue to hone your academic writing skills alongside your creative conceptual and technical progression. You will consider the historical and cultural influences that have impacted on your subject and have shaped its contemporary presence. You will be encouraged to reflect on your studio practice in terms of the key influences that have informed the evolution and development of your subject specialism and to consider issues of ethics and sustainability in contemporary practice.

### Indicative Syllabus

The syllabus below indicates topics within each of the three Areas of Study outlined in the NUA Award and Credit Scheme for this unit.

### Creative Practice

- Enhanced Technical skills
- Ideas development
- Key components of creative practice and processes
- Project planning

juxtapositions of 3D elements, improving your software skills and presenting your findings through academic writing and presentation.

Through lab sessions and self-directed learning you'll produce scenes that imply a whole world, and you will add and develop these scenes to say more about the world that is inferred. It will be important you show your incremental work improvements at 'Dailies' sessions throughout the Unit, as used in industry. This unit will test not only your imagination but your emerging modelling, lighting and compositing skills.

- Enhanced documenting
- Critical reflection and evaluation

### Professional Practice

- Learning environment and Health & Safety awareness
- Team working
- Industry awareness
- Audience and market understanding
- Presentation and pitching skills
- Developing personal planning

### Research

- Academic writing conventions
- Global, cultural, social and economic issues of creative practice
- Essential subject histories and critical theories
- Selecting, gathering and evaluating information
- Research and analysis of images and objects

### Aims

The aims of the unit are:

- To establish a practical approach to learning as part of an undergraduate experience in art, design or media practice.
- To identify some of the key historical, cultural and ethical influences on your subject, by investigating the work of others through visual and text-based research.
- To enable a flexible approach to problem-solving and idea generation.
- To develop a capacity for independent learning and time-management.
- To foster an enquiring and professional approach in the production of work.
- To develop skills in visual, written and oral communication, and to work effectively with others as part of professional skills development.

### **Learning Outcomes**

Upon successful completion of this unit, you will be able to:

- LO5:** Demonstrate knowledge of the fundamental techniques, materials and processes associated with your subject.
- LO6:** Make judgements and present arguments through engagement with fundamental historical, cultural and ethical concepts and theories associated with your subject.
- LO7:** Demonstrate a range of approaches to creative and experimental problem solving.
- LO8:** Communicate the development of your ideas clearly using text, image or object.
- LO9:** Demonstrate fundamental subject-specific and transferable skills relevant to your practice and future career.
- LO10:** Evidence independent planning and time-management in the development of your work.

### **Assessment Requirements**

You are required to submit the following for assessment:

- A Body of creative work
- Research and supporting documentation
- A Reflective Journal
- A 2,000 word text
- A group presentation

## WHAT YOU WILL BE DOING IN THIS UNIT

You are now progressing from 2D to 3D modes on the course, and now we also add the fourth dimension of time in order to experiment further and gain both a breadth and depth of industry practice. This means observing, analysing and capturing motion that brings new meanings to the convincing photorealistic imagery you are starting to construct. You will begin in lab sessions learning industry processes like Camera Tracking, Match Moving and extracting motion data from footage and transferring it to your developing scenes. You will learn contemporary industry standards as these processes are the bedrock of the moving imagery you'll need to reproduce in your professional VFX career. You will refine these techniques through seminars and workshops and then experiment and create a series of articulated movements that conform to the VFX "world" you are making.

However, if you're exploring motion, you need objects to move! The VFX theme of the second year is that of **Prototypes and Inferred Worlds**, so you'll start this unit by engaging in the challenge of researching and building 3D models optimised for simple movement-articulated and flexible. You'll be introduced to Poly Modelling, Dynamics, and Animation Techniques, and apply this to a series of visual scenarios. In order to make your 'inferred worlds' move convincing, you will need to apply look development (Look Dev) processes to meld 3D moving elements within your lens originated scenes.

In parallel, you'll be independently researching and writing a 3,000 word text which will help you further explore your own practice in a particular VFX area (for instance: why fur or hair is

<b>Unit Title:</b>	Experimentation and Application
<b>Reference:</b>	BA2a
<b>Year:</b>	2
<b>Credit Points:</b>	80
<b>Duration:</b>	20 Weeks
<b>Study Time:</b>	800 Hours

### Description

This unit will enable you to utilise and expand the specialist knowledge and skills introduced in year 1 through focused experimentation and application. The unit enables you to develop a more targeted engagement with the techniques, materials and media of your subject and encourages you to explore the dynamics of process and theory relevant to the subject and the development of your individual practice. You will continue developing specialist practical skills and the unit will help you to identify areas for personal development through independent study.

Industry engagement is a key feature of the unit and you will be supported in identifying markets and audiences for your work. You may engage in competition entry, working with live briefs and other forms of work-related learning which will help you to develop an understand of the professional pathways open to you.

You will be encouraged to reflect on your studio practice in terms of the professional, commercial and contextual influences that have informed the development of your subject specialism. This unit will develop your skills as a reflective practitioner and enable you to develop your visual, verbal and written communication skills.

The unit will support you to continue to develop academic writing skills through composition of a longer written text for which you will independently research, analyse and present your findings. Understanding and exploring methods of developing and presenting an argument through word and image will form a key part of your learning.

### Indicative Syllabus

The syllabus below indicates topics within each of the three Areas of Study outlined in the NUA Award and Credit Scheme for this unit.

### Creative Practice

- Expanded technical skills
- Creative problem solving and evidence of conceptual thinking

problematic, or how inverse kinematics led to certain kinds of characters).

This unit will challenge your visual, verbal and written communication skills so you find new ways to describe and debate what you are discovering.

*Important note:*

This course teaches industry level practice and is supported in this by its Industry Liaison Group (ILG), representatives of whom you may meet at key points of the course, and who ensure you are learning contemporary industry processes.

If certain conditions are right, it may be possible in the second year to gain short periods of work experience or engage in a live brief. This might also take the form of working with 3<sup>rd</sup> years on external collaborations, attending industry conferences, or partaking in industry masterclasses. Work experience is more likely in smaller outfits who use VFX generalists. Such opportunities that come from industry to tutors will be made open fairly for all students to apply.

- Diversity and experimentation in materials and processes
- Project development
- Establishing a personal archive
- Sustaining an individual practice

### Professional Practice

- Health and Safety in context
- Work-related learning
- The creative and cultural economy
- Competition entry and live briefs
- Effective communication of visual, audio and written material
- Professional awareness

### Research

- Writing as creative practice
- Developing a sustainable & ethical practice
- Key components of critical theory and subject discipline
- Evaluating texts and a variety of research methodologies
- Identifying authoritative sources for extended research

### Aims

The aims of the unit are:

- To encourage breadth and depth of enquiry into, and application of, techniques, processes and materials.
- To develop your awareness and understanding of professional practices and the creative industries associated with your subject.
- To offer a range of approaches to problem solving and ideas generation
- To establish a range of research methods relevant to your discipline and support your understanding of their application.
- To facilitate an appreciation of the application of theories and ideas to your practice.
- To consider and evaluate appropriate methods for successfully communicating and presenting ideas to different audiences.

### **Learning Outcomes**

Upon successful completion of this unit, you will be able to:

- LO1:** Demonstrate knowledge and application of the key techniques, materials and processes associated with your subject.
- LO2:** Identify relevant historical, cultural and ethical concepts and principles and apply them to a range of contexts.
- LO3:** Demonstrate knowledge of problem-solving approaches used in your discipline and show a critical approach to practice-based enquiry in your work
- LO4:** Critically reflect on the boundaries of your knowledge and learning.
- LO5:** Articulate the findings of your research and practice using appropriate means of production and communication
- LO6:** Demonstrate your ability to identify, plan and, where appropriate, participate in relevant work-related learning.

### **Assessment Requirements**

You are required to submit the following for assessment:

- A Body of creative work
- Research and supporting documentation
- A Reflective Journal
- A 3,000 word text

## WHAT YOU WILL BE DOING IN THIS UNIT

Up until now you have explored the idea of the photoreal, and VFX as a form of imitation of natural laws and appearance. Now, through a professional-standard project we take your learning and experience and apply it to the much less solid world of metaphor, allusion and allegory. You will make imaginative leaps to attempt to portray inner worlds and emotional states, to describe the intangible through a shared collective imaginary. You will explore the power of teamwork and collaboration, pitching to gain support from others. You'll manage workloads using a wide range of VFX techniques to present to the viewer a unique world space or environment; giving them cues to 'read' and identify with the imagery and *objects* you have created.

In order to do this you will work with others who will bring different skills but also different cultural and artistic perspectives to your practice, and help you consider how different audiences will interpret your imagery, and how context may be a factor in how it is viewed. You'll be exploring how to be a professional, but also what kind of professional you want to be.

This Unit not only gives you opportunities to learn about negotiation, communication and leadership through first-hand experience of teams, but also the chance to collaborate in more flexible, open-ended and innovative ways, prototyping ideas to fruition. This might be with a single or group of people on other courses in the University, or even beyond.

Your individual and team project work will cause you to consider questions of representation and other key issues. A

<b>Unit Title:</b>	Collaboration
<b>Reference:</b>	BA2b
<b>Year:</b>	2
<b>Credit Points:</b>	40
<b>Duration:</b>	10 Weeks
<b>Study Time:</b>	400 Hours

### Description

This unit provides an opportunity for you to work with others and to expand the learning experiences gained in Year 2; in particular, the unit focuses on developing your creative practice and enhancing your technical and conceptual skills within the context of other practitioners and audiences. It is anticipated that you will use the methods, knowledge and understanding gained previously to help you locate your work in relevant professional and creative contexts. The unit also allows the flexibility to help you engage with external-facing activities and to interact with a variety of audiences beyond the Course using appropriate forms of participation, dissemination and communication.

You will have the opportunity to test a number of different collaborative working practices in this Unit; for example: in-course collaborations which explore generic team-working skills; cross-course collaborations that look at the opportunity for potential interdisciplinary outcomes; collaboration with industry to understand key skills required for working in your subject and an inter-change of ideas that allow you to work in groups with students from different disciplines to learn new skills and gain new knowledge.

The unit will raise your awareness of your own skills and help you identify appropriate career opportunities through work-related learning and collaborative projects, and, as part of the Unit you will be supported in expanding your own skill set. Team-working, project management and the ability to communicate effectively with a variety of stakeholders are essential skills that you will develop as part of this unit. This unit will also equip you with the skills to enable you to become a more autonomous learner and assist in preparing you for further study at Year 3.

### Indicative Syllabus

The syllabus below indicates topics within each of the three Areas of Study outlined in the NUA Award and Credit Scheme for this unit.

### Creative Practice

- Appropriate Interdisciplinary skills
- Tackling unfamiliar problems and concepts

1,000 word research report proposal will allow you to focus on key debates and questions regarding how your creative practice interfaces with the world, which you will take forward into the approaching third year.

*Important note:*

This course teaches industry level practice and is supported in this by its Industry Liaison Group (ILG), some of whom you will meet at key points of the course, and who ensure you are learning contemporary industry processes.

If certain conditions are right, it may be possible in the second year to gain short periods of work experience or engage in a live brief. This might also take the form of teams entering industry recommended competitions or actively attending industry conferences, or working on a script breakdown for a film. Work experience is more likely in smaller outfits who use VFX generalists. Such opportunities will be made open and fair for all students to apply.

You may attend industry visits and presentations, and take part in any industry seminars.

You'll also drive your own research agenda based on your past experience (what you've uncovered) and your future ambition (where you want to take your studies).

- Developing a collaborative practice
- Project Management
- Documenting individual and group roles
- Creative decision-making

### Professional Practice

- Understanding professional Health and Safety considerations
- Working with cross disciplines teams
- Commissioning and funding structures
- Curation and display
- Professional pitches and presentations
- Enterprise and Entrepreneurship

### Research

- Writing for a diverse audience
- Processes linking production, distribution, circulation and consumption
- Identifying research questions and appropriate methodologies

### Aims

The aims of the unit are:

- To consolidate your knowledge, skills and experiences as an independent learner and informed practitioner
- To increase awareness and understanding of the creative industries and the nature of working within them
- To strengthen your understanding and application of appropriate research methods for your study
- To prepare you for study at Year 3 and future employment.

### **Learning Outcomes**

Upon successful completion of this unit, you will be able to:

- L07:** Demonstrate an understanding of a wide range of applications for your work, including workplace contexts for your practice.
- L08:** Propose and plan areas of research for further study, based on analysis of appropriate techniques and information that extend your knowledge.
- L09:** Evaluate and employ appropriate communication and presentation techniques in relation to subject and audience.
- L10:** Demonstrate your ability to work collaboratively in order to meet specified goals.

### **Assessment Requirements**

You are required to submit the following for assessment:

- A Presentation of collaborative outcomes
- A 1,000 word Research Report Proposal
- Research and supporting documentation
- A Reflective Journal

## WHAT YOU WILL BE DOING IN THIS UNIT

In this unit you will look both backwards and plan forwards. The last two years have exposed you to the many applications and practices of Visual Effects, and given you critical, conceptual and technical tools with which to form your own individual practice. Only after careful review and reflection on your journey thus far, and an evaluation of where you want to be next year, can you start making your best work now.

Having assessed your position and practice, you will look forward and research and develop the kind of portfolio you want to represent you after University.

The VFX course theme for this year is Fusion, the convergence of technology, art and enterprise within your work which you'll need as a VFX artist or practitioner.

Depth of research, robust planning and taking responsibility for your own learning are key, and this unit spans research, preparation, gestation and the initiation of full-blown VFX production. You'll deliver the 5,000 word research report you prepared for in Unit BA2b, or, depending on your choice, the 10,000 words extended Research Report option with the agreement of your tutors.

In this unit you'll also be encountering some serious project management tools and methodologies to apply to your VFX work on the remainder of the course. You'll start to think of your creative work as a series of projects with value, whatever you decide to make; whether your output is a series of visualisations, input into a narrative film of some kind, or proposed simulations- whatever is appropriate to your chosen progression route to the professional world beyond the University walls. As such your ability

<b>Unit Title:</b>	Research and Development
<b>Reference:</b>	BA3a
<b>Year:</b>	3
<b>Credit Points:</b>	60
<b>Duration:</b>	15 Weeks
<b>Study Time:</b>	600 Hours

### Description

This unit will support you in further developing the skills of research and development essential to maintaining a sustainable creative practice. The Unit requires that you to build on the knowledge and skills gained through Years 1 and 2 of the course to develop a body of work that is informed by appropriate research and experiential learning.

This unit will encourage you to assume a greater degree of responsibility for your learning, and you will be supported in determining the direction of your work through tutorial guidance and appropriate discussion and debate to develop both your research and creative practice. Academic and pastoral support will help you plan effectively and realistically for the remainder of the course as you formulate and finalise plans for your creative practice. The parameters of your creative practice for the final course unit, ('Resolution and Innovation') should assist you in contextualising your work for this unit.

This unit will concentrate on the process of further developing and reflecting upon your practice to date in order to provide a robust basis for the work to be undertaken in the final unit of the course. The production of your creative practice and written work will enable you to refine your understanding of historical, contemporary and environmental including ethical perspectives that are essential to and indicative of an in-depth understanding of your subject specialism.

In this unit you are required to submit a completed Research Report of 5000 words that broadly contextualises your practice and demonstrates your engagement with a sustained piece of written work. With the agreement of your course tutors, you may choose to develop an extended Research Report of 10,000 words, which allows you to explore your topic of choice in greater depth. You will agree a schedule of work with your course tutors that reflects an appropriate balance between your creative practice and written work.

to organise or project manage your creative work (and other people) will be nurtured and challenged, and you'll create a budget for your work as part of your project initiation, so you can identify where value resides. You'll develop a Project Initiation Document (PID) and Learner Pact (outlined in the Project brief) with support from your tutor.

You will start work on your main project, possibly expanding or improving previous imagery, or work on a new venture with others, or on your own. Some time may be spent breaking down a script or treatment if this is appropriate to your project. Teamwork and Collaboration are encouraged as they can multiply what you can get done, and you may find your own live brief opportunities or seek commissioned work to plan for, if you wish.

## Indicative Syllabus

The syllabus below indicates topics within each of the three Areas of Study outlined in the NUA Award and Credit Scheme for this unit.

### Creative Practice

- Advanced specialist technical skills
- Advanced concept generation
- Proficiency with materials and processes
- Sustaining a prolonged project
- Learning Agreement methodology
- Reflection as an emerging practice

### Professional Practice

- Professional presentation
- Communicating research findings
- Focussed career planning including further study

### Research

- Structuring and sustaining an argument
- Applying a theoretical basis to practice
- Demonstrating knowledge at the forefront of the discipline
- Enquiry based research methods using museums, archives and libraries
- Advanced information retrieval skills to gather, sift, synthesise and organise material independently

### Aims

The aims of the unit are:

- To support you in planning and managing the production of a body of creative and written work
- To help you to sustain and engage with an in-depth enquiry into your interests
- To develop knowledge and understanding of your subject though historical, contemporary and cultural perspectives
- To help you to develop a breadth of reference material through creative practice and text based research
- To help you devise and apply strategies that will sustain independent learning
- To develop skills in effective communication

### **Learning Outcomes**

Upon successful completion of this unit, you will be able to:

- LO1:** Demonstrate rigorous use of recognised methods to test and analyse concepts, materials and processes appropriate to your area of study.
- LO2:** Show ability to construct and develop arguments using knowledge and methods pertinent to current research and practice in your subject.
- LO3:** Show evidence of utilising a range of independently gathered scholarly information including primary material and academic or industry-based research.
- LO4:** Develop questions and make informed judgements that allow potential solutions to problems to be identified.
- LO5:** Communicate creatively and appropriately to a variety of audiences using text and images.
- LO6:** Demonstrate a clear approach to planning and developing a career in the creative industries.

### **Assessment Requirements**

You are required to submit the following for assessment:

- A Body of creative work
- Research and supporting documentation
- A Reflective Journal
- A Research Report of 5,000 words or an extended Research Report of 10,000 words\*

\*If you are undertaking a 10,000 word Research Report you should write a minimum of 2000 words for the draft submission in this unit.

## WHAT YOU WILL BE DOING IN THIS UNIT

Your portfolio never gets finished, but in terms of this course you are working towards resolution; for finished visual statements in whatever form (clips, environments, film etc.) to take you to the next step in your practice, whether that is a career or further study.

Whilst this unit might be focused on the production of your final practical work, it would be a mistake to see it purely in isolation. Your work will be given impetus by your completed Research report and its findings, and your preparations in the last unit. In this unit you'll have to balance and apportion your personal work with work you do for your other teams, and there will be continual enhancements, unexpected diversions, and maybe even creative detours or revisions that mean you will need to call on further organisational flexibility and management skills to navigate.

The VFX theme of this year is Fusion, or the convergence of art, science/technology and enterprise into your practice, and in this unit you'll be creating your own personal mix of these elements through your work.

Your aim is to develop and present your skills, knowledge and experience, resolving challenges and innovating in terms of processes and imagery. In parallel with the completion of your work, you'll be considering how you market and promote yourself, and show your 'creative edge' within an often crowded marketplace. This may involve acting on the opportunity that the NUA Degree show and related activity can give you, and seeking other opportunities too, both online and off.

As part of your innovative practice you

<b>Unit Title:</b>	Resolution and Innovation
<b>Reference:</b>	BA3b
<b>Year:</b>	3
<b>Credit Points:</b>	60
<b>Duration:</b>	15 Weeks
<b>Study Time:</b>	600 Hours

### Description

This final unit is the culmination of your undergraduate study within your chosen specialism and, as the title implies, gives you the opportunity to bring your work to a suitable degree of resolution within the context of innovative practice.

The Unit is dedicated to your creative practice and provides you with the opportunity to plan, develop and produce a substantial body of work over an extended period of time. The unit allows you to consolidate and capitalise on the skills, knowledge and experience gained throughout the course and provides a unique opportunity to generate a sustained and innovative body of resolved work that will support you in your future career or further study.

This unit supports you in developing and delivering a professionally presented project relevant to your chosen career path. You will consider appropriate forms of production, display and dissemination – including self-promotion, communicating your practice effectively to a range of specialist and non-specialist audiences.

You will utilise skills in organisation, management and communication alongside the technical, creative and conceptual skills associated with your subject practice. The research, development and reflection undertaken in the previous unit (Research and Development) provides the foundation needed to support this final stage of your study.

### Indicative Syllabus

The syllabus below indicates topics within each of the three Areas of Study outlined in the NUA Award and Credit Scheme for this unit.

### Creative Practice

- Delivering work to appropriate professional standards
- Consolidating approaches to concepts and production methods
- Realisation of appropriate methodologies
- Project resolution
- Documentation as outcomes

might also use this point to outline 'post hoc' alternative workflows or schemata that illustrate a new understanding of the limitations or flawed components in your current work, or improve and innovate representations or models used within earlier work to increase the impact of your built world(s). You might also choose this time to assimilate yourself into industry life by attending events, conferences, or contributing to external projects.

- Reflection and resolution

### Professional Practice

- Application of professional Health and Safety requirements
- Promotion and dissemination
- Creative and appropriate communication with word, sound, image etc.
- Manage creative, personal and interpersonal commitments in a professional manner

### Research

- Writing for a specialist and non-specialist audience
- Conceptualising creativity and authorship
- Application of knowledge at the forefront of the discipline
- Application of appropriate research methodologies

### Aims

The aims of the unit are:

- To develop awareness and understanding of the creative potential and practice of the subject.
- To enable a sustained critical engagement with the subject through referencing the bodies of knowledge that support and challenge the discipline.
- To develop awareness of debates within and around the subject area to profile the diversity of a contemporary practice.
- To enable you to sustain a commitment to thematic enquiry.
- To help you initiate work that is innovative, ambitious and original in thinking to develop outcomes beyond an obvious solution.
- To enable you to communicate your intentions effectively.

### **Learning Outcomes**

Upon successful completion of this unit, you will be able to:

- LO7:** Demonstrate consistent knowledge and understanding of your subject area, making detailed reference to current and emerging practice.
- LO8:** Show evidence of sustained critical engagement with an issue or question relevant to your subject.
- LO9:** Demonstrate an open and evidence-based approach to learning.
- LO10:** Apply skills, methods and knowledge to develop and extend projects beyond initial findings and solutions into resolved outcomes.
- LO11:** Communicate effectively to a range of specialist and non-specialist audiences using means appropriate to your practice.
- LO12:** Evidence a professional approach to career development through appropriate self-promotion, industry awareness and engagement.

### **Assessment Requirements**

You are required to submit the following for assessment:

- A Body of creative work
- Research and supporting documentation
- A Reflective Journal

## **LEARNING AND TEACHING**

Learning and teaching methods include lectures, individual and group tutorials, placements and work-related learning.

NUA emphasises learning and discovery through studio and workshop practice, critical reflection and experimentation with ideas, processes and materials. Other learning and teaching methods include lectures, individual and group tutorials, placements and work-related learning, alongside technical demonstrations, exhibition practice and other presentations of students' work.

Students' progress is assessed in a number of ways. All courses provide clear information about the work required for assessment, and the criteria which are used in assessment. Courses make considerable use of group critiques where students present their work for discussion. Courses also use self-evaluation and peer evaluation to complement the assessment of work by tutors. Students come into contact with a wide range of staff, all of them committed to supporting learning. As well as academic staff, these include staff in technical workshops, the Library, Employability Service, and Student Support.

### **Independent Learning**

Independent learning complements and builds upon the teaching you receive on your course. Key aspects of learning develop through the acquisition of research skills, the generation and development of ideas, and independent study. Learning Agreements are used by courses to support independent study and to enable students to focus, direct and negotiate their individual pathway through the course.

At undergraduate level, an increasing emphasis is placed on independent learning as students' progress through their course. This enables them to make the best use of the University's resources in support of individual creative development. Independent learning may be based on projects or assignments set by staff, or it may be self-initiated. There are significant opportunities for self-initiated study at both undergraduate and postgraduate levels.

### **PAL Mentor Scheme**

Each undergraduate degree course has a system of peer support known as Peer Assisted Learning or PAL. This means that Year One students have ready access to trained Year Two students from their course, from before they arrive through to the end of the first year. The advice and support given by the PAL Mentors is directly relevant to first year students and is delivered by Year Two or Three students who have had similar experiences themselves. This extra layer of support for first year students has been found to be very effective in helping to smooth the transition to higher education.

### **Collaboration**

One of the most exciting aspects of study at NUA is the opportunity for students to concentrate on their art and design discipline. However, there are also valuable opportunities to learn from the experience of working collaboratively or as part of a team with students on other courses. Collaborative projects may form part of the approved content of a course unit, with the outcomes of the collaboration being formally assessed, or they can be negotiated as part of a learning agreement. The chief benefit of collaborating in this way is that it reflects the realities of professional practice in the creative industries, and thus it enhances students' understanding of the professional context for their work.

## **Work-Related Learning**

All NUA courses offer students opportunities to undertake periods of work placement in order to reinforce their professional development and awareness. Other types of work-related learning emphasised by courses include: guest lectures or workshops led by visiting artists and designers; 'live' projects or commissions for external clients; mentoring by practising artists and designers; and projects which simulate professional practice in the creative sectors. In addition, students are encouraged to participate in regional and national competitions for artists and designers such as the Starpack Packaging Awards and Design & Art Direction Awards, often achieving significant success.

Students also undertake voluntary projects, for example in schools, hospitals and the wider community. This experience is particularly valuable for those who want to pursue a career in teaching or community work. NUA is developing mechanisms by which such activity can be accredited towards a degree. The University regularly takes advice from the creative and cultural industries in order to maintain the currency of its courses and to ensure that the learning experience is relevant to future employment, freelance work and progression to postgraduate study.

## **Learning and Teaching**

All of these features of learning, teaching and assessment are underpinned by NUA's Strategy for Learning, a key document which sets out its principle aims and the ways in which learning and teaching will be enhanced at NUA. Academic and other staff involved in teaching and the support of learning regularly identify and share good practice with colleagues within the University and nationally. Each year NUA recognises the contribution made by staff through the award of a Teaching Fellowship and a number of Teaching and Student Support Awards.

Staff are able to apply for small grants for the development of new approaches to learning and teaching, and for funding to promote the application of their research and creative practice to inform and update their teaching. The University is committed to a learning environment in which traditional forms of learning and teaching are complemented by e-learning, and which is significantly enhanced by its Library and learning resources.

## **ASSESSMENT**

Assessment is the process of evaluating or assessing your learning. Sometimes it will involve consideration of work in progress, while at others it concentrates on work which you have completed and submitted as assessment requirements for each unit of study.

The University assesses you through the coursework that you produce as you complete each unit. Each unit will require that you present a portfolio of work which may include finished pieces of work, written work, your research, and a reflective journal which allows you to evaluate your learning and highlight your strengths and areas for further development.

There are two types of assessment that you will receive while on your course:

- Formative assessment is the process whereby your work and progress are assessed at regular intervals with accompanying feedback from staff in order to help to improve your performance. Staff will provide you with feedback on the progress of your work before you reach the assessment point at the end of the unit. This may take place one-to-one with a tutor (e.g. in a tutorial) or in group sessions.
- Summative assessment is the process whereby your work is evaluated and given a mark at the end of course unit. Summative assessment formally records your achievement of the unit's learning outcomes.

You will be assessed against the approved unit learning outcomes and assessment requirements as outlined in Unit Outlines. Project Briefs guide you through the specific areas of work in which you will be engaged in order to produce the work required for assessment and so successfully achieve the unit learning outcomes.

Many courses also employ self and peer evaluation or assessment within their overall assessment processes. Self-evaluation and self-assessment require you to reflect upon your learning and performance and to submit this to tutors. Peer evaluation and peer assessment are used when students have been working in teams and require each team member to reflect upon their peers' performance and to submit this to tutors.

### **Feedback Following Assessment**

Formative assessment is itself a process of feedback on your progress. You are also given feedback on your performance following each summative assessment. This is delivered in accordance with your unit outline and with reference to the NUA Student Agreement. Feedback on assessment performance will be given to you in a written report with opportunities to meet your tutor for further discussion.

## **REQUIREMENTS FOR PROGRESSION ON THE COURSE**

The general requirements for progression are as follows:

Progression from Year 1 to Year 2 (Honours degree): you must pass all Year 1 units and be awarded 120 credits (FHEQ Level 4)

Progression from Year 2 to Year 3: (Honours degree): you must pass all Year 2 units and be awarded 120 credits (FHEQ Level 5)

If you do not pass a unit at first attempt you will normally be offered at least one further attempt to pass the unit through resubmission. If you do not pass the unit after a resubmission attempt you will not be allowed to progress to the next stage of study and may have your course terminated.

See the University's Student Regulations and Procedures

<http://www.nua.ac.uk/about/information/support/>

If you fail all 120 credits in a year of study you will not normally be offered resubmission opportunity and may have your course terminated, or be required to repeat the year, depending on your circumstances.

## **REQUIREMENTS FOR THE AWARD OF A QUALIFICATION**

To qualify for the award of Bachelor of Arts with Honours [BA (Hons)] you must have achieved a pass in all units and be awarded 360 credits.

*If you do not complete your course for any reason, you may qualify for an exit award as follows:*

- Completion of Year 1 – Certificate of Higher Education (120 credits at Level 4 (FHEQ))
- Completion of Year 2 – Diploma of Higher Education (240 credits with 120 credits at Level 5 (FHEQ))
- Partial completion of Year 3 – BA Degree (Unclassified) (300 credits with 60 credits at Level 6 (FHEQ))

## **CIRCUMSTANCES THAT MAY RESULT IN COURSE TERMINATION**

The University may terminate your place on a course if:

- Your attendance is deemed unsatisfactory;
- You do not meet the requirements for progression as set out in the Student Regulations and Procedures;
- You do not pay the University fees and/or any other required payments in line with our Undergraduate or Postgraduate (Taught) Student Tuition Fees Payment policies;
- You are found to have broken specific course or other regulations about student conduct or anti-social behaviour; or
- You need a visa to study at NUA and have broken the terms and conditions of that visa as set out by UK Visas and Immigration (UKVI). UKVI is the part of the Home Office responsible for deciding who has the right to visit or stay in the country, including the right to study.

## QUALITY ASSURANCE

The University was established as an independent higher education institution under Section 121 of the Education Reform Act 1988, and is a recognised body with taught degree awarding powers. The University is regulated by the Office for Students (OfS). Information about the University's status can be found on the [OfS Register](#) and on the [list of recognised bodies](#) published on the UK Government (GOV.UK) website. The OfS regulatory framework will come fully into force from 1 August 2019. As part of its registration with the OfS the University is required to satisfy a number of conditions that relate to quality and standards. From 1 April 2018 until 31 July 2019 the University will be subject to the OfS Transitional Arrangements.

Prior to 2016, the University was quality assured by the QAA. Read [NUA's latest review](#).

Quality in the University is assured by a number of systems and procedures. Many of these notably those which contribute to annual monitoring work to an annual cycle. Others, such as the Periodic Review of courses, operate over longer timescales. The objectives of the QME systems and procedures are:

1. To enhance the quality of courses and university professional services;
2. To attract a high quality student application and intake;
3. To ensure that the University is a reflective community committed to continuous enhancement;  
and
4. To retain the confidence of key stakeholders, including external accreditors and funding bodies.

**Date of Course Specification: October 2018**