UNIVERSITY OF KENT

Programme Specification

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 he/she passes the programme. More detailed information on the learning outcomes, content and teaching, learning and assessment methods of each module can be found in the programme handbook. The accuracy of the information contained in this specification is reviewed by the University and may be checked by the Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education.

Degree and Programme Title: **MA Visual Effects Production (Compositing); MA Visual Effects Production (3D)**

1. **Awarding Institution/Body**	University of Kent
2. **Teaching Institution**	Pearson College London / Escape Studios
3. **School responsible for management of the programme**	School of Engineering and Digital Arts
4. **Teaching Site**	Escape Studios, Pearson College London
5. **Mode of Delivery**	Full-time
6. **Programme accredited by**	N/A
7. **Final Award**	MA PG Dip PG Cert
8. **Programme**	MA Visual Effects Production (Compositing) MA Visual Effects Production (3D)
9. **UCAS Code (or other code)**	
10. **Credits/ECTS value**	MA 180 credits (90 ECTS) PG Dip 120 credits (60 ECTS) PG Cert 60 credits (30 ECTS)
11. **Study Level**	*7*
12. **Relevant QAA subject benchmarking group(s)**	
13. **Date of creation/revision** *(note that dates are necessary for version control)*	April 2016
14. **Intended Start Date of Delivery of this Programme**	September 2016

15. **Educational Aims of the Programme**

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 are certified trainers for Autodesk software and have been delivering training to the industry for 14 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 choose a path on entry and follow different classroom sessions before coming back together for the project modules.

16 Programme Outcomes
The programmes provide opportunities for students to develop and demonstrate knowledge and understanding, qualities, skills and other attributes in the following areas.

On completion of the PG Cert (3D), students will have:

A. Systematic Knowledge and Understanding of: *(Subject-specific knowledge and understanding)*

A1: the theory and concepts behind the use of 3D software tools for visual effects;

Skills and Other Attributes

B. Intellectual Skills: *(Subject-specific intellectual skills)*

B1: critically evaluate and select 3D software tools and techniques for visual effects production;

C. Subject-specific Skills: *(Practise and professional skills)*

C1: create 3D content for use in a visual effects shot using professional tool and techniques.

C2: composite computer generated 3D objects into a still image.

D. Transferable Skills: *(Non-subject specific key skills)*

D1: manage complex processes and tasks to deliver a project to a defined brief;

D2: communicate complex creative and technical information to a variety of audiences.

On completion of the PG Cert (Compositing), students will have:

A. Systematic Knowledge and Understanding of: *(Subject-specific knowledge and understanding)*

A2: the theory and concepts behind the use of compositing software tools for visual effects;

Skills and Other Attributes

B. Intellectual Skills: *(Subject-specific intellectual skills)*

B2: critically evaluate and select compositing software tools and techniques for visual effects production;

C. Subject-specific Skills: *(Practise and professional skills)*

C3: composite content for use in a visual effects shot using professional tool and techniques.

D. Transferable Skills: *(Non-subject specific key skills)*

D1: manage complex processes and tasks to deliver a project to a defined brief;

D2: communicate complex creative and technical information to a variety of audiences.

On completion of the PG Dip (3D), students will have in addition to the learning outcomes of the PG Cert (3D):

A. Systematic Knowledge and Understanding of: *(Subject-specific knowledge and understanding)*

A3: emerging theory, techniques and approaches for 3D visual effects production

Skills and Other Attributes

B. Intellectual Skills: *(Subject-specific intellectual skills)*

B3: critically evaluate and select 3D the visual effects techniques needed to complete a complex production project.

C. Subject-specific Skills: *(Practise and professional skills)*

C4: apply high-level skills to deliver a complex visual effects project

D. Transferable Skills: *(Non-subject specific key skills)*

D3: demonstrate advanced practical abilities in the implementation of a collaborative project.

On completion of the PG Dip (Compositing), students will have in addition to the learning outcomes of the PG Cert (Compositing):

B. Systematic Knowledge and Understanding of: *(Subject-specific knowledge and understanding)*

A4: emerging theory, techniques and approaches for compositing for a visual effects production

Skills and Other Attributes

B. Intellectual Skills: *(Subject-specific intellectual skills)*

B4: critically evaluate and select compositing techniques needed to complete a complex visual effects production project.

C. Subject-specific Skills: *(Practise and professional skills)*

C4: apply high-level skills to deliver a complex visual effects project

D. Transferable Skills: *(Non-subject specific key skills)*

D3: demonstrate advanced practical abilities in the implementation of a collaborative project.

On completion of the MA (3D), students will have in addition to the learning outcomes of the PG Dip (3D):

A. **Systematic Knowledge and Understanding of:** *(Subject-specific knowledge and understanding)*

A5: the potential advancements in 3D visual effects and their impact on the production process.

B. Intellectual Skills: *(Subject-specific intellectual skills)*

B5: research and critical evaluation of emerging theory and practice in the field of 3D visual effects.

B6: technically and critically analyse and solve problems in the absence of full information and under conditions of uncertainty.

C. Subject-specific Skills: *(Practise and professional skills)*

C5: implement a complex 3D visual effects production to a professional standard.

C6: organise and manage a project within a professional production pipeline;

D. Transferable Skills: *(Non-subject specific key skills)*

D4: organise and schedule resources effectively to a high standard.

D5: communicate complex technical and creative information in a structured and effective way to a variety of audiences.

On completion of the MA (Compositing), students will have in addition to the learning outcomes of the PG Dip (Compositing):

B. **Systematic Knowledge and Understanding of:** *(Subject-specific knowledge and understanding)*

A6: the potential advancements in visual effects compositing and their impact on the production process.

B. Intellectual Skills: *(Subject-specific intellectual skills)*

B6: technically and critically analyse and solve problems in the absence of full information and under conditions of uncertainty.

B7: research and critical evaluation of emerging theory and practice in the field of visual effects compositing.

C. Subject-specific Skills: *(Practise and professional skills)*

C6: organise and manage a project within a professional production pipeline;

C7: implement a complex visual effects compositing production to a professional standard.

D. Transferable Skills: *(Non-subject specific key skills)*

D4: organise and schedule resources effectively to a high standard.

D5: communicate complex technical and creative information in a structured and effective way to a variety of audiences.

Teaching and Assessment Strategies

Concepts, principles and practice are explored within a working environment and under the supervision of tutors with industrial experience. Professional and personal skills are developed through discussion and project work which involves problem solving and design exercises.
A particular strength of this programme is the contribution made to the teaching programme by successful practising industry professionals.

Each 30-credit module on the programme requires students to commit 300 hours of study. Some of these hours will be formally supervised in the learning environment and others will involve students carrying out private study.

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.

Learning Resources

Teaching will take place in an environment with up-to-date hardware and software with regular update and replacement cycles and other industry-standard facilities. The involvement of key companies in the post-production and visual effects area assure of the quality of the learning environment and resources.

E-learning will be a central element in the delivery of modules within the framework via on-line via forums, blogs (industry and academic) and industry publications. Where necessary, students will

be supplied with links to relevant on-line sources either via Blackboard, social bookmarking software or other web-based collaborative software. Use of external resources and technology, such social networks and instant messaging systems will feature in modules as appropriate.

For more information on the skills developed by individual modules and on the specific learning outcomes associated with any Alternative Exit award relating to this programme of study, see the module mapping table, located at the end of this specification.

17 Programme Structures and Requirements, Levels, Modules, Credits and Awards
The programme covers a range of specialist topics, leading to the qualification of a Masters degree. This includes three classroom based modules, a collaborative project and a 3-month production project.

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. For further information on modules and credits refer to the Credit Framework at http://www.kent.ac.uk/teaching/qa/credit-framework/creditinfo.html

Stage1 has two pathways, one specialising in 3D and one specialising in Compositing, students choose sets of three optional modules on entry that define their chosen pathway. Compulsory modules are core to the programme and must be taken by all students studying the programme. 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. For the descriptors of each of these levels, refer to Annex 2 of the Credit Framework at http://www.kent.ac.uk/teaching/qa/credit-framework/creditinfoannex2.html.

To be eligible for the award of a masters 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 (Compositing) or Visual Effects Production (3D). 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 has met the required volume of credit (e.g. 60 credits for the PGCert) but not in the specific pathway modules listed below the student will be entitled to an unnamed alternative exit award (e.g. ‘PGCert’).

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. For further information refer to the Credit Framework at http://www.kent.ac.uk/teaching/qa/credit-framework/creditinfo.html.

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 be in August, September or October and another at the start of the calendar year, which will be in January or February.

	Code	Title	Level	Credits	Term(s)
	Stage1				
	3D pathway modules				
VX7001	PRSN7010	3D Foundation	7	30	1
VX7002	PRSN7017	Visual Effects	7	30	1
VX7006	PRSN7011	Advanced 3D for Visual Effects	7	30	2
	Compositing pathway modules				
VX7004	PRSN7013	Compositing 1	7	30	1
VX7005	PRSN7014	Compositing 2	7	30	1
VX7007	PRSN7012	Advanced Compositing for Visual Effects	7	30	2
	Compulsory Modules (all pathways)				
PR7003	PRSN7016	Studio Project	7	30	2
	Stage2				
	Compulsory Modules (all pathways)				
PR7004	PRSN7015	Production Project	7	60	3

18 Work-Based Learning

Disability Statement: Where disabled students are due to undertake a work placement as part of this programme of study, a representative of the Pearson College will meet with the work placement provider in advance to ensure the provision of anticipatory and reasonable adjustments in line with legal requirements.

Work-based learning is not structurally part of the programme, but learning takes place in an environment that replicates that of a typical creative industries studio. This is particularly

relevant to the project work, where students work in teams to industry practices and procedures, ensuring that they have experience of the workplace environment during their studies.

19 Support for Students and their Learning

- Escape Studios / Pearson College London induction programme
- Programme/module handbooks
- Learning resources & support - https://www.pearsoncollegelondon.ac.uk/student-experience/undergraduate/learning-support.html
- Student Support & Wellbeing https://www.pearsoncollegelondon.ac.uk/study/postgraduate/student-support.html
- PCL Student Association https://www.pearsoncollegelondon.ac.uk/student-experience/undergraduate/pcsa.html
- Careers and Employability https://www.pearsoncollegelondon.ac.uk/working-with-business/career-coaching.html

20 Entry Profile

The minimum age to study a degree programme at the university is normally at least 17 years old by 20 September in the year the programme begins. There is no upper age limit.

20.1 **Entry Route**

For fuller information, please refer to the prospectus

All applicants:

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

OR

have equivalent industrial experience in the field of visual effects 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.

Non-native English Speakers

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.

Diversity

Pearson College London 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. The College has a process to assess additional learning needs, providing support and where appropriate ‘reasonable adjustments’ in assessment.

APECL
Students may be admitted on to the programme, or may gain exemptions from particular modules, based on APECL. Such cases are subject to prior approval by the University of Kent according to its APECL process. See:

http://www.kent.ac.uk/teaching/qa/codes/taught/annexr.html.

20.2 **What does this programme have to offer?**

This programme has been designed through close consultation with industry professionals and is based on over 14 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. Pearson College London / Escape Studios' 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.

20.3 **Personal Profile**

Applicants should exhibit:

- A passion for the VFX industry
- An intellectual interest in the history, theory and practice the VFX industry
- An ability to adapt and change with varying circumstances
- A thirst for knowledge and a desire to solve complex problems
- An enthusiasm for collaborative and team working
- A desire to shape the future of VFX

21 **Methods for Evaluating and Enhancing the Quality and Standards of Teaching and Learning**

21.1 **Mechanisms for review and evaluation of teaching, learning, assessment, the curriculum and outcome standards**

- Student module evaluations and feedback questionnaires
- Annual programme and module monitoring reports, see http://www.kent.ac.uk/teaching/qa/codes/taught/annexe.html

- External Examiners system, see http://www.kent.ac.uk/teaching/qa/codes/taught/annexk.html
- Periodic programme review, http://www.kent.ac.uk/teaching/qa/codes/taught/annexf.html
- Annual staff appraisal
- Peer observation
- Quality Assurance Framework, http://www.kent.ac.uk/teaching/qa/codes/index.html
- QAA Higher Education Review, see http://www.qaa.ac.uk/InstitutionReports/types-of-review/higher-education-review/Pages/default.aspx

21.2 **Committees with responsibility for monitoring and evaluating quality and standards**

Committees at the University of Kent include:

- School Graduate Studies Committee
- Faculty Graduate Studies Committee
- Graduate School Board
- Faculty Board
- Board of Examiners

Committees at Pearson College London include:

- Staff-Student Liaison Committee
- Progression and Retention Committee
- Review and Enhancement Committee
- Academic Board

21.3 **Mechanisms for gaining student feedback on the quality of teaching and their learning experience**

- Staff-Student Liaison Committee
- Postgraduate Taught Experience Survey (PTES)
- Student module evaluations
- Postgraduate Student Representation System

21.4 **Staff Development priorities include:**

- Annual Appraisals
- Institutional Level Staff Development Programme
- Study Leave
- Industry contact and experience
- Academic Practice Provision (PGCHE, ATAP and other development opportunities)
- PGCHE requirements
- HEA (associate) fellowship membership
- Professional body membership and requirements
- Programme team meetings
- Research seminars
- Conferences

22 **Indicators of Quality and Standards**

- PCL QAA Higher Education Review Plus report May 2014 (http://www.qaa.ac.uk/en/ReviewsAndReports/Documents/Pearson%20College/Pearson-College-HER-Plus-14.pdf)

- QAA Educational Oversight Report May 2015 (http://www.qaa.ac.uk/en/ReviewsAndReports/Documents/Pearson%20College/Pearson%20College-EO-AM-15.pdf)

Future indicators after the commencement of the programmes will include:

- Annual External Examiner reports
- Annual programme and module monitoring reports (UoK and PCL)
- Result of PCL periodic review
- Result of University of Kent Periodic Review

22.1 The following reference points were used in creating these specifications:

- QAA UK Quality Code for Higher Education
- University of Kent's School and Faculty plan
- PCL Plan/Learning and Teaching Strategy

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Programme Title: MA Visual Effects Production (3D)
Mapping of Programme and Module Learning Outcomes

Programme Learning Outcomes		MA (3D) / PG Dip (3D) / PG Cert (3D) 3D Foundation	PG Cert (3D) VFX	PG Dip (3D) Adv 3D for VFX	PG Dip (3D) Studio Project	MA (3D) Production Project
PG Cert	**A1**	8.1	8.1			
	B1	8.2	8.2			
	C1	8.3, 8.4	8.3, 8.4			
	C2	8.4	8.4			
	D1	9.1	9.1			
	D2	9.2	9.2		9.2	
Additional PG Dip	**A3**			8.1	8.1	
	B3			8.2	8.2	
	C4			8.3	8.3	
	D3				8.3, 9.1	
Additional MA	**A5**					8.1
	B5					8.1
	B6					8.2
	C5					8.3, 8.4
	C6					8.4, 9.1
	D4					9.1
	D5					9.2

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Programme Title: MA Visual Effects Production (Compositing).
Mapping of Programme and Module Learning Outcomes

Programme Learning Outcomes		MA (Comp) / PG Dip (Comp) / PG Cert (Comp)				
		Comp 1	**Comp 2**	**Adv Comp for VFX**	**Studio Project**	**Production Project**
PG Cert	**A2**	8.1	8.1			
	B2	8.2	8.2			
	C3	8.3	8.3			
	D1	9.1	9.1			
	D2	9.2	9.2		9.2	
Additional PG Dip	**A4**			8.1	8.1	
	B4			8.2	8.2	
	C4			8.3	8.3	
	D3				8.3, 9.1	
Additional MA	**A6**					8.1
	B6					8.1
	B7					8.2
	C6					8.4, 9.1
	C7					8.3, 8.4
	D4					9.1
	D5					9.2