Programme specification

1. Overview / factual information

Programme/award title(s)	Foundation Degree (FD) Visual Media Arts
Teaching Institution	South West College
Awarding Institution	The Open University (OU)
Date of first OU validation	April 2020
Date of latest OU (re)validation	April 2025
Next revalidation	April 2030
Credit points achieved for the award	240
UCAS Code (if applicable)	N/A
HECoS Code (if applicable)	
LDCS Code (FE Colleges England only	N/A
Programme start date and cycle of starts if appropriate.	September 2025
Underpinning QAA subject benchmark(s)	Communication, Media, Film & Cultural Studies
Other external and internal reference points used to inform programme outcomes (including QAA Characteristics Statements). For apprenticeships, the standard or framework against which it will be delivered.	Northern Ireland Skills Barometer 2023-2033 Government Industrial Strategy – Economy 2030; South West College Development Plan; QAA UK Quality Code for Higher Education Feedback from industry Subject Benchmark Statement: Media
Professional/statutory/ accreditation recognition	N/A
For apprenticeships fully or non-integrated Assessment. If fully integrated, EPAO being used.	N/A
Mode(s) of Study (PT, FT, DL, Mix of DL & Face-to-Face) Apprenticeship	Full Time
Duration of the programme for each mode of study	Two Years
Dual accreditation (if applicable)	N/A
Date of production/revision of this specification	March 2025

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 take full advantage of the learning opportunities that are provided.

More detailed information on the learning outcomes, content, and teaching, learning and assessment methods of each module can be found in student module guide(s) and the students handbook.

The accuracy of the information contained in this document is reviewed by the University and may be verified by the Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education.

2. Programme overview

2.1 Educational aims and objectives

Contemporary, creative industries require individuals that can understand, analyse and challenge underlying principles of creative media production and creatively apply extensive skills to produce original work. With this in mind, the Foundation Degree (FD) Visual Media Arts aims to produce graduates with a solid understanding and critical awareness of production of relevant content for the creative industries. The programme aims to develop the individual's production skills and creativity in their chosen subject specialism by enabling them to produce challenging work that uses their chosen medium effectively.

Students will be challenged by workshops designed to enable them as learners to acquire the skills they need to confidently produce work, providing an open and supportive approach to experimentation, evaluation and critical self-reflection.

The overall aim of the course is to provide a diverse educational experience that facilitates critical skill development within the student's chosen discipline. Moreover, the course will provide students with an opportunity for progression on to the BA (Hons) Visual Media Arts (Top Up). A Work Based Learning component has been incorporated into the programme to enhance the student's employability and effectiveness in the workplace.

In fulfilling this purpose, the FD Visual Media Arts aims to:

- Develop skills to investigate, analyse and present visual information/innovative ideas to employers within the Visual Media Arts industries
- Develop the individual as a 'creator' within their chosen specialism, equipping them with the necessary depth and expanse of knowledge needed to confidently address a range of creative problems
- Develop knowledge and understanding of the roles and responsibilities within a chosen specialism, on both an individual and team level, helping to fulfil the students' personal and professional aspirations.

The FD Visual Media Arts seeks to:

- Equip students with a sound knowledge and critical understanding of the underlying, theories, concepts and principles of creative media production processes and practice.
- Enable students to use, compare, analyse and evaluate the processes of pre-production, production and post-production, to produce the most appropriate project outputs.
- Develop the students' ability in the critical evaluation of the appropriateness of different approaches to creative solving.
- Develop an understanding of good communication and practice within the professional and ethical framework of the creative industries.
- Develop students in a range of key skills, personal qualities and attitudes essential for lifelong learning leading to successful performance in working life.

The Cert. HE in Visual Media Arts aims to:

- Equip students with a basic knowledge and understanding of the underlying theories, concepts and principles of creative media production processes and practice.
- Enable students to use, compare and analyse the processes of pre-production, production and post-production, to produce project outputs.
- Develop students' abilities in the selection and application of basic approaches to solving problems and how these solutions will be applied in a visual media arts context.
- Develop a basic understanding of good practice within the creative industries.
- Develop students in a range of key skills, personal qualities and attitudes essential for successful performance in working life.

Academic Development at Levels 4 & 5:

At Level 4 the aim is to develop the students in terms of the undertaking of independent research, fundamental enquiry and questioning of process and practices. Encouraging students to undertake academic reading, utilising journals and moving beyond surface level research. The emphasis here is on embedding the underlying concepts and principles associated with Visual Media Arts, providing students will the skills needed to interpret, analyse and start to challenge concepts, with discussion. The skills gained here will form the basis of further learning and development at Level 5. Level 5 will equip the students with the skills of analysis and critical thinking, develop the professional and presentation skills needed for progression on to high level study or entry to industry. Students at Level 5 will be able to apply their knowledge of practices to the workplace and exert confidence in their decision making as a result of analysis and evaluation. There will be a focus on helping the student evolve into an independent learner and thus capable of progression on to the degree if they should choose to do so.

2.2 Relationship to other programmes and awards

(Where the award is part of a hierarchy of awards/programmes, this section describes the articulation between them, opportunities for progression upon completion of the programme, and arrangements for bridging modules or induction)

The College offers the following courses from which students may progress, but are not restricted to, after successful completion, to the FD Visual Media Arts. Entry may be at varying points depending on the level of qualification the student has attained:

Pearson BTEC Level 3 540 Diploma Creative Media Practice Game Development
Pearson BTEC Level 3 Diploma Creative Media Practice Game Development
Pearson BTEC Level 3 540 Diploma Creative Media Practice Film
Pearson BTEC Level 3 Diploma Creative Media Practice Film
Pearson BTEC Level 3 540 Diploma Art & Design
Pearson BTEC Level 3 Diploma Art & Design
Access Diploma/Degree
Diploma in Higher Education

In general, across all of the campuses, there is significant volume of A Level students attending Grammar and Secondary Schools that our courses have also attracted over the last number of years. This course will be very attractive to a large number of A Level students that currently travel out of the South West Region to undertake creative undergraduate programmes.

Within this foundation degree programme there will be a number of awards in-built:

Upon successful completion of Level 4 modules (120 credits) students will have attained the exit award of Cert. HE;

Upon successful completion of 240 credits – 120 credits at Level 4 and 120 credits at Level 5 modules students will have attained the award of Foundation Degree (FD).

Successful completion of this programme, at FD level (240 credits), may allow for articulation to the BA (Hons) Visual Media Arts, a range of undergraduate courses through our local universities (The Open University, Ulster University and Queen's University Belfast) and universities across the UK and further afield.

2.3 For Foundation Degrees, please list where the 60 credit work-related learning takes place. For apprenticeships an articulation of how the work based learning and academic content are organised with the award.

The 60 credits of work-related learning in the main will come from the 40 credit Work Based Learning module in Year 2. The other 20 credits will be effectively accrued from the Professional Development and Practice module also in Year 2.

Students will be given a real-life project within the setting of our Innovation Centres to facilitate best outcomes and provide real world experience as much as possible.

2.4 List of all exit awards

In the event that a student is unable to complete the Foundation Degree in Visual Media Arts for extenuating/mitigating reasons that student can be awarded a Certificate of Higher Education (Cert.HE) upon successful completion of 120 credits at Level 4.

3. Programme structure and learning outcomes
(The structure for any part-time delivery should be presented separately in this section.)
Please adjust 'levels' to reflect SCQF if applicable

Note. Once a student registers on the programme, they will choose a Games or Film Pathway. At that stage modules will be confirmed depending on the pathway chosen, in addition to the 4 compulsory modules as listed below.

Programme Structure - LEVEL 4					
Compulsory modules	**Credit points**	**Optional Modules**	**Credit points**	**Is module compensatable?**	**Semester runs in**
Visual Aesthetics	20			Yes	1
Specialist Media Studies	20			Yes	1
		Games Pathway			
		3D Modelling Fundamentals	20	Yes	1
		Texturing For Games	20	Yes	2
Sound Design for Visual Media Arts	20			Yes	2
Post-Production Techniques & VFX	20			Yes	2
		Film Pathway			
		Introduction To Film Production	20	Yes	1
		Cinematography	20	Yes	2

Intended learning outcomes at Level 4 are listed below:

Learning Outcomes – LEVEL 4
3A. Knowledge and understanding

Learning outcomes:	Learning and teaching strategy/ assessment methods
A1 Discuss and apply theories and concepts relating to the historical evolution of particular genres, aesthetic traditions and forms, and of their current characteristics and possible future developments. **A2** Develop an understanding of the history of communication, film and games technologies, and a recognition of the different ways in which the history of, and current developments in, media and communication can be understood in relation to technological change. **A3** Develop an understanding of and the skills involved in the processes linking pre-production, production, distribution, circulation, reception and use. **A4** Identify and discuss the ways in which specific media and their attendant technologies make possible different kinds of aesthetic effects and forms.	**Learning and Teaching Methods**: Subject related knowledge and understanding is delivered to and acquired by students during lectures and seminars, through directed reading, videos, IT based resources, case studies and experiential learning. Group seminars and individual tutorials promote analysis of learning and the development of independent research skills. Live projects, competitions and work related learning also provide vehicles for learning and teaching. Exploration, analysis and evaluation of industry practice in both historial and theoretical contexts, enable learners to not only hone their academic writing skills but also to make judgements and develop arguments pertaining to the industry (both historical and contemporary) to expand their knowledge and understanding at Level 4. This familiarity of terminology and context at Level 4 will form the basis of their knowledge and understanding at Level 5 which will then be challenged. **Assessment Methods:** Assessment strategies here offer students clear guidance with reference to future development. Self-reflection and peer evaluation constitutes an

Learning Outcomes – LEVEL 4

3A. Knowledge and understanding

A5 Develop knowledge and understanding of the fundamental practical creative processes and practice through engagement in one or more production practices.	important part of formative assessment. Summative assement will provide the students with clear and concise feedback that will embed not only good practice in future knowledge acquisition but also feed forward, informing students exactly how to improve and expland their knowledge in their continuing studies, particularly as they move from Level 4 to Level 5 and beyond. Testing of the knowledge base is principally through coursework assignments, essays, reports, research projects and practical creative production projects. Other documentation may include pre-production documentation, Log Book/Diary, Visual commentary (including PowerPoint presentations), storyboards, character designs, scripts, visual reference boards, production diaries and final creative visual media products.

3B. Cognitive skills

Learning outcomes:	Learning and teaching strategy/ assessment methods
B1 Identify the underpinning principles and concepts of communication, media, film, games and culture as they have emerged historically and appreciate the processes through which they have come into being, with reference to social, cultural and technological change. **B2** Make critical judgements in the understanding and evaluation of media forms.	**Learning and Teaching Methods**: Intellectual qualities are developed mainly through practical work reinforcing the material encountered in lectures. Taking control of production equipment, editing and recording software, asset creation, following industry practices in asset development etc. fosters development of these skills at Level 4. Working under guidance and within the constraints of training, risk assessment and health, safety and well-being, students have ownership over the intended outcome making it more motivating and enjoyable. Students experience learning where they

3B. Cognitive skills	
B3 Consider and evaluate their own work in a reflexive manner, with reference to academic codes of practice and/or professional conventions, issues and debates. **B4** Independently collect data via various forms of research for essays, projects or creative productions involving sustained independent and critical enquiry.	are problem solving through solution finding and implementation while developing effective communication and use of terminology. Students will be presented with briefs (both live and simulated) the utilisation of Project Based Learning, a student-centred pedagogy where students will learn through the experience of solving an industry defined problem. Students will be engaged as partners in their learning with their input taken on board in terms of areas of focus. PBL involves students working on a project over a period of time through engagement of a real-world problem to find a solution to a complex problem. This approach enables students to develop their critical thinking, creativity and communication skills. PBL is used to create a contagious energy among students to develop a deeper understanding of the subject and quest for further knowledge and skills through active learning. At Level 4, students will be introduced to fundamental production practices across Visual Media Arts in both video game and film specific concepts. Units such as 3D modelling, texturing for games, digital film and cinematography will provide students with a robust understanding of core subject specific concepts **Assessment Methods:** Assessment focuses on the coursework submissions, essays and project reports and practical outcomes. Some of these skills are also assessed in formal presentations. Presentation of ideas, research and planning in all projects. Where students solve problems for clients, cognitive skills are assessed via pitching and presenting of ideas and client feedback on the final outcomes produced.

3C. Practical and professional skills	
Learning outcomes:	**Learning and teaching strategy/ assessment methods**
C1 Produce work that uses the effective manipulation of one or more of sound, images, and the written word, including understanding relevant industry standards and how they are defined and achieved. **C2** Initiate, develop and realise distinctive and creative work within various forms of writing or of aural, visual, audio-visual, sound or other electronic and digital media. **C3** Experiment, as appropriate, with forms, conventions, languages, techniques and practices. **C4** Employ production skills and practices to challenge or advance existing forms and conventions and to innovate. **C5** Be adaptable, creative and reflexive in producing output for a variety of audiences and in a variety of multi-platform media.	**Learning and Teaching Methods**: The learning and teaching methods place emphasis on practical demonstrations and studio workshops, experimental work, team and ideas generation and solution development. Project briefs simulating real practice also contribute providing students with opportunities to hone practical and professional skills and produce excellent outcomes. Action learning, where students develop their own way to a comprehensive solution, allows students to experience familiarity of working in a group through allocating roles, researching and presenting opinion and analysing and evaluating solutions. Embedding peer assessment and feedback through reflection. Working within allotted timeframes and resources' constraints develop professional skills that are worthy of any workplace. Underpinning practical skills are developed throughout the Level 4 modules, providing students with the building blocks needed to develop new techniques and practices as they progress through the year. At Level 4 the key practical skills will be designed to develop the technical capability needed by students to answer uncomplicated practical problems or briefs, taking responsibility for the production of resolute outcomes. Modules have been carefully chosen to provide students with core competency within their chosen field while still providing fundamentals applicable to all forms of visual media arts development. The importance of these modules must not be overlooked as the students will call upon these skills as they progress through Levels 5 and 6 and into industry.

3C. Practical and professional skills

	Assessment Methods:
	Assessment of the practical and professional skills is achieved through the practical project outcomes and final practical pieces. The planning documentation, sketchbooks, storyboards, risk assessments and so on and so forth. Self-reflection and peer evaluation constitutes an important part of formative assessment. Continuous feedback occurs throughout the learning and assessment process with students receiving final feedback on all assessments in all modules designed to identify practical areas of strength and highlight areas for continuing future improvement in order to strengthen the knowledge, skills and abilities of the individual students, building confidence and fostering creativity in all.

3D. Key/transferable skills

Learning outcomes:	Learning and teaching strategy/ assessment methods
D1 Work in flexible, creative and independent ways, showing self-discipline, awareness of relevant ethical considerations, self-direction and reflexivity. **D2** Organise and manage supervised, self-directed projects. **D3** Work productively in a group or team, showing abilities at different times to listen, contribute and also to lead effectively. **D4** Deliver work to a given length, format, brief and deadline, properly referencing.	**Learning and Teaching Methods**: Transferable and key skills are delivered throughout the course, i.e. lectures, coursework assignments, studio work. The teaching and learning of ICT skills will be within the course structure. Workshops include demonstrations such as software skills, PowerPoint presentations and Library Research Skills. Students are encouraged to expand their academic reading and writing skills at every stage of the programme. Effective learning environments are engendered in studios, workshops, and all practical modules utilise industry standard software in editing, visual FX and more, with staff and students sharing experiences as partners in the process of learning. Other learning and teaching methodologies include team-teaching, demonstration and peer learning.

3D. Key/transferable skills	
D5 Sources and ideas and making use, as appropriate, of a problem-solving approach. **D6** Develop, as appropriate, specific proficiencies in using a range of current and emergent media technologies.	Workshops with Academic Mentors will support development of skills in research, academic writing and referencing throughout the module. Teaching and learning will be placed within the context of social, ethical, legal, relevant to Visual Media Arts industries. Collaboration and communication will be utilised through all learning and teaching activities, group discussions and simulations, project-based learning activities, report writing and blended and virtual learning platforms. Over the course of the year learners will be given key information which they must research, analyse and interpret, then seek out further reading where they must independently broaden their understanding of specific problems and creative principles. This will be designed to stretch learners and develop their skills from Level 4 to Level 5. Creative thinking and critical analysis are engendered in every aspect of the programme and will be further fostered and encouraged through lecturer mentoring on a weekly basis. Discussion and critiques supports the development of problem resolution at a higher intellectual level. **Assessment Methods:** Emphasis will be placed on continual feeding forward to students in order to support the development and maintenance of these key 21st century skills. Pitches and presentations encourage confidence and develop communication skills. Group work embeds the importance of excellent interpersonal skills and effective communication of ideas and direction to team mates. Diaries and blogs encourage reflection of ideas and processes, becoming more critical and logical in their thinking as the students progress. Report and essay writing will challenge the students to develop ideas and formulate arguments within the parameters of a

3D. Key/transferable skills	
	specified word count. The assessment of Level 4 encourages learners to be more independent in their learning and research.

[Exit Award - Certificate in Higher Education Visual Media Arts (Cert.HE)]

Note. In addition to the 3 compulsory modules listed below, students will undertake Games or Film modules, depending on the pathway chosen at registration.

Programme Structure - LEVEL 5					
Compulsory modules	**Credit points**	**Pathway Specific Modules *two per pathway**	**Credit points**	**Is module compensatable?**	**Semester runs in**
Writing Narrative for Visual Media Arts	20			Yes	1
		Games Pathway			
	20	Lighting & Rendering For Games	20	Yes	1
		Advanced 3D Modelling	20	Yes	1
		Film Pathway			
		Documentary Production	20	Yes	1
		Photography	20	Yes	1
Work Based Learning	40			No	2
Professional Development & Practice	20			Yes	2

Intended learning outcomes at Level 5 are listed below:

<u>**Learning Outcomes – LEVEL 5**</u>

3A. Knowledge and understanding

Learning outcomes:	Learning and teaching strategy/ assessment methods
A1 Discuss and apply theories and concepts relating to the historical evolution of particular genres, aesthetic traditions and forms, and of their current characteristics and possible future developments **A2** Develop an understanding of the history of communication, film and games technologies, and a recognition of the different ways in which the history of, and current developments in, media and communication can be understood in relation to technological change. **A3** Develop an understanding of and the skills involved in the processes linking pre-production, production, distribution, circulation, reception and use. **A4** Identify and discuss the ways in which specific media and their attendant technologies make possible different kinds of aesthetic effects and forms.	As with Level 4 the subject specific knowledge and understanding are delivered to and acquired by students via lectures, tutorials and seminars. Here students will be directed towards academic reading, independent research and encouraged to expand their knowledge through experimentation. Group critiques promote reflective learning and evaluation by the learner in all modules. At Level 5 the students will be encouraged to contextualise their work, undertake extensive research in order to expand and strive for improvement in their knowledge, understanding and application of the theorectical and historical contexts and concepts encountered. Work-based learning and project management units will challenge students to put their acquired knowledge into independent professional practice at Level 5, preparing students for the challenges of Level 6. **Assessment Methods:** Assessment strategies here offer students clear guidance with reference to future development. Self-reflection and peer evaluation constitutes an important part of formative assessment. Summative assessment will provide the students with clear and concise feedback that will embed not only good practice in future knowledge acquisition but also feed forward,

Learning Outcomes – LEVEL 5

3A. Knowledge and understanding

| **A5** Develop knowledge and understanding of the fundamental practical creative processes and practice through engagement in one or more production practices.

A6 Exhibit an understanding of the skills required to work in the creative industries, specifically within the area of chosen specialism etc. | informing students exactly how to improve and expand their knowledge in their continuing studies, particularly as they move from Level 5 to Level 6 and into industry or further studies.

Testing of the knowledge base is principally through coursework assignments, essays, reports, research projects and practical creative production projects. Other documentation may include pre-production documentation, Log Book/Diary, Visual commentary (including PowerPoint presentations), storyboards, character designs, scripts and final creative visual media products. |

3B. Cognitive skills	
Learning outcomes:	**Learning and teaching strategy/ assessment methods**
B1 Identify the underpinning principles and concepts of communication, media, film, games and culture as they have emerged historically and appreciate the processes through which they have come into being, with reference to social, cultural and technological change. **B2** Make critical judgements in the understanding and evaluation of media forms.	**Learning and Teaching Methods**: Like Level 4 students will be presented with briefs, however, at Level 5 Project Based Learning will move to a more complex industry defined problem with live client briefs, forcing the students to develop their critical thinking, creativity and communication skills. At Level 5 WBL and Project Management guide the students to develop a more critical awareness, enabling students to formulate ideas and confidently research and experiment to strengthen their outcomes. **Assessment Methods:**

3B. Cognitive skills	
B3 Consider and evaluate their own work in a reflexive manner, with reference to academic codes of practice and/or professional conventions, issues and debates. B4 Independently collect data via various forms of research for essays, projects or creative productions involving sustained independent and critical enquiry. **B5** Identify a well-defined focus for independent project, using research and applied practical skills to devise, plan and produce an appropriate output, presented to professional expectations in an appropriate format.	Assessment focuses on the coursework submissions, essays and project reports and practical outcomes. Some of these skills are also assessed in formal presentations. Presentation of ideas, research and planning in all projects. Where students solve problems for clients, cognitive skills are assessed via pitching and presenting of ideas and client feedback on the final outcomes produced.

3C. Practical and professional skills	
Learning outcomes:	**Learning and teaching strategy/ assessment methods**
C1 Produce work that uses the effective manipulation of one or more of sound, images, and the written word, including understanding relevant industry standards and how they are defined and achieved. **C2** Initiate, develop and realise distinctive and creative work within various forms of writing or of aural, visual, audio-visual, sound or other electronic and digital media. **C3** Experiment, as appropriate, with forms, conventions, languages, techniques and practices.	**Learning and Teaching Methods**: At Level 5 practical and professional skills are inherent in all modules, as students are expected to deliver practical outcomes to a professional standard at this level. Students producing independent work where students get interested in a variety of information sources and practical experience through engagement and stimulation of learning. Students learn as an individual to study and develop independent thinking, problem solving, analysing, and evaluation and self-reflection skills. Collaborative group-based work will be assessed by work submitted individually by each candidate and may also include an element of assessment by tutor

3C. Practical and professional skills	
C4 Employ production skills and practices to challenge or advance existing forms and conventions and to innovate. **C5** Be adaptable, creative and reflexive in producing output for a variety of audiences and in a variety of multi-platform media. **C6** Demonstrate awareness of ethical issues with the creative industries in own practical production projects.	observation of each candidate's contribution to the team and effectiveness as a team member while the team is working on the project. The practical and professional skills fostered at Level 4 will be further developed at Level 5. Students moving with confidence from fundamental technical skills to become flexible, adaptive and experimental. Responses to live brief and work experience placements will be able to respond to the ever-evolving creative landscape by identifying and solving complex, challenging issues. **Assessment Methods:** Assessment of the practical and professional skills is achieved through the practical project outcomes and final practical pieces. The planning documentation, sketchbooks, storyboards, risk assessments etc. Self-reflection and peer evaluation constitutes an important part of formative assessment. In Semester 2 of Level 5, students are expected to demonstrate their production and professional practice in both the Professional Development and Work Based Learning modules. In order to achieve success the students here must demonstrate independence, make reasoned judgements to answer the problems set and present outcomes accordingly.

3D. Key/transferable skills	
Learning outcomes:	**Learning and teaching strategy/ assessment methods**
D1 Work in flexible, creative and independent ways, showing self-discipline, awareness of relevant ethical considerations, self-direction and reflexivity. **D2** Organise and manage supervised, self-directed projects. **D3** Work productively in a group or team, showing abilities at different times to listen, contribute and also to lead effectively. **D4** Deliver work to a given length, format, brief and deadline, properly referencing. **D5** Sources and ideas and making use, as appropriate, of a problem-solving approach. **D6** Develop, as appropriate, specific proficiencies in using a range of current and emergent media technologies.	**Learning and Teaching Methods**: Transferable and key skills are delivered throughout the course, i.e. lectures, coursework assignments, studio work. The teaching and learning of ICT skills will be within the course structure. Workshops include demonstrations such as ICT skills, PowerPoint presentations and Library Research skills. Effective learning environments are engendered in studios, workshops, and all practical modules utilise industry standard software in editing, visual FX and more, with staff and students sharing experiences as partners in the process of learning. Other learning and teaching methodologies include team-teaching, demonstration and peer learning. Over the course of the year learners will be given key information which they must research, analyse and interpret, then seek out further reading where they must independently broaden their understanding of specific problems and creative principles. This will be designed to stretch learners and develop their skills from Level 5 to Level 6. Work Based Learning and Project Management modules at Level 5 enable students to work in industry (or simulated) contexts driving them to become effective in their time management, taking responsibility for their work, as well as managing working with others in a professional environment. Creative thinking and critical analysis are engendered in every aspect of the programme and will be further fostered and encouraged through lecturer mentoring on a weekly basis. Discussion and critiques supports the development of problem resolution at a higher intellectual level. At Level 5, students are encouraged to develop their self-reflection and set

3D. Key/transferable skills	
	their own targets with the tutor, reflecting on feedback and responding to this.
	Assessment Methods:
	Emphasis will be placed on continual feeding forward to students in order to support the development and maintenance of these key 21st century skills. Pitches and presentations encourage confidence and develop communication skills. Group work embeds the importance of excellent interpersonal skills and effective communication of ideas and direction to teammates. Diaries and blogs encourage reflection of ideas and processes, becoming more critical and logical in their thinking as the students progress.

[Fd Visual Media Arts]

4. Distinctive features of the programme structure

- **Where applicable, this section provides details on distinctive features such as:**
- ➢ where in the structure above a professional/placement year fits in and how it may affect progression
- ➢ any restrictions regarding the availability of elective modules
- ➢ where in the programme structure students must make a choice of pathway/route
- **Additional considerations for apprenticeships:**
- ➢ how the delivery of the academic award fits in with the wider apprenticeship
- ➢ the integration of the 'on the job' and 'off the job' training
- ➢ how the academic award fits within the assessment of the apprenticeship

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- This programme of study will offer clear routes that facilitate opportunities for successful progression from Level 3 qualifications including BTEC, A Level, and Level 4 qualifications, Certificate in Higher Education and HNC to this Foundation Degree in Visual Media Arts and subsequently onto BA (Hons) Visual Media Arts (Top Up),
- South West College will be one the first regional colleges in the Northern Ireland to provide this type of opportunity with multiple entry points, including the prospect of going forward and availing of a one-year full time BA (Hons) Top Up.
- The FD Visual Media Arts is subject to high levels of employer engagement with workshops and review of work taking place at various stages throughout curriculum delivery.
- Employer engagement will be encouraged throughout the programme in curriculum development, evaluation and self-sourced placements on an ongoing basis.
- South West College is an Unreal Engine Academic Partner and as such sets the highest standards in terms of relevant industry focused skill delivery.
- Learners will engage in Professional Development and Practice and Work Based Learning (WBL).
- Access to a range of Innovation Centres and dedicated staff to aid project based learning and research.
- Learners have the opportunity to undertake individual research and creative projects in area of their choice.
- Strong teaching team in terms of variety of industry experience, academic and professional qualifications supporting high quality teaching and learning.

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5. Support for students and their learning
(For apprenticeships this should include details of how student learning is supported in the workplace)

Learners and their learning are supported in a number of ways:

Induction sessions provide timely advice on the key aspects of the course and services provided by the college. These are for learners in their first year and are delivered by members of staff from the course teams and the college learner support staff. It welcomes learners to the college, gives detailed information on college structure, staff contact information, teaching and learning resources, health and safety and learner

support services and details on the college environment. It also provides advice concerning assessment and how to approach study in higher education.

A course handbook provides all the necessary information about the course. It includes information on the teaching staff, outline information on modules studied and the course calendar. It contains the course specification and the current course regulations.

Module handbooks describe the content of each module delivered in a particular year. These provide learners with the module teaching and assessment schedules and a list of the recommended texts.

Learning resources at SWC are available to support the learner. The VLE is used to enable learners to access resources from lectures plus additional reading, resources and activities in their own private study time. They are directed to online resources for research as well as e-books through SWC library catalogue. Turnitin plagiarism software is utilised so that they can improve their referencing skills. There are also opportunities for blogs, forums, collaborative and peer learning and support through the VLE which are used to ensure both equality of learning experiences and opportunities for further challenge and research supplementary to the main delivery in the classroom. Regular discussions and support sessions through software (Skype, Teams, Google Classroom, Collaborate) are provided by teaching staff for all learners.

A course tutor/studies advisor for the course year provides a single first point of reference for both new and continuing learners. The course tutor/studies advisor is an experienced member of staff with the responsibility of assisting learners in their personal and career development.

A counselling service is available to learners who are experiencing problems with aspects of their lives other than the strictly academic. However, if these problems are affecting their studies or academic progress the course tutor/studies advisor and appropriate members of the course team co-operate to provide recommended help and advice to the learner concerned. This service is provided by an external independent counsellor and the Learner Support Officer at South West College.

Strong linkage with learner services in relation to health and welfare, finance, guidance and counselling, careers and special needs.

A careers service is also available for learners to help them in determining their future career and supporting their applications for employment. Learners will discuss career options during meetings with their class tutor/studies advisor. The student/staff consultative committee gives learners the opportunity to raise and discuss general course concerns.

Learners have access to the college library facilities, staff and to IT support staff. Learners are provided with e-mail accounts and have full access to the Internet.

Learners will also have access to lecturer support through e-mail and the College VLE and Google classroom.

Pastoral care on the Foundation Degree Visual Media Arts programme is based on a personal tutor system. Each learner on the course is assigned to a personal tutor who is a member of the course team and takes a dedicated interest in one of the year groups on a course and acts as an intermediary between the year group and the course director. With larger year groups there may be more than one personal tutor.

> **Research/Study Skills** – students will be required to undertake an initial induction module that will outline research methods and study skills. Students will also develop research skills and study skills through the undertaking of a number of modules. HE Academic Mentors are available on every campus to support HE students in the development of the academic reading, writing and research skills.

6. Criteria for admission
(For apprenticeships this should include details of how the criteria will be used with employers who will be recruiting apprentices.)

Entry point - Year 1:

Students who wish to gain admission at year one of the Foundation Degree.

All applications will be individually considered. Successful applicants must have normally studied at level 3 or above for a minimum of two years. Applicants should possess a minimum of four GCSEs grades A, B, C that should include English and or other equivalent qualifications in addition to one of the following

- successful completion of an advanced diploma;
- successful completion of a BTEC Extended Diploma/Diploma/Sub Diploma/Certificate in a related subject;
- successful completion of A level study;
- equivalent qualifications such as Scottish Certificate of Education or International Baccalaureate, a European Baccalaureate, Irish Leaving Certificate with four subjects at higher level (H5);
- qualifications deemed equivalent to the above;
- UCAS tariff score of **32 with portfolio** or above is desired for entry to this programme. Entry can also be made from national certificate/diploma, HE access, NVQs or by the college's policy relating to APEL.

Entry point - Year 2:

Students who wish to gain admission at year two of the Foundation Degree

Learners will require a Certificate in Higher Education or a Higher National Certificate (or equivalent) in a **Media or similar creative** related subject, qualifications deemed equivalent or by the college's policy relating to APEL. Students must also hold GCSE English at grade 4 (grade C) or above (Level 2 Literacy and Numeracy qualifications are also accepted).

International Students

An international student is defined as a student who requires a Tier 4 (student) visa in order to study in the UK. Such applicants may or may not be living overseas at the time of making their course application. International applicants should apply via the usual route for full-time undergraduates. All international students must meet the college general entry requirements and academic qualifications requirements of the course. In addition, international students must have the required level of English Language IELTS academic 5.5- 6.0.

All international qualifications will be checked for academic comparability using the online UKENIC qualifications database.

Students may gain admission through Recognised Prior Learning (RPL)

RPL is the process by which the college can identify, assess and certify an applicant's past educational and vocational achievements. Applicants wishing to be considered for APL for a particular programme for the purpose of admission or credit must bring this to the attention of the course director at the application and interview stage. Applicants wishing to be considered for direct entry into a level above four or five would normally only be credited a maximum of 240 credits. Gaining credit at level 6 does not qualify.

APEL is where applicants can gain admission to a programme on the basis of their experiential learning. At the application stage applicants should inform the admissions staff and the relevant course director of their intention to apply for APEL. APEL can only be used for admission purposes and not to gain credit or exemptions.

All applicants will be interviewed to assess their suitability for this programme of study.

7. Language of study

English.

8. Information about non-OU standard assessment regulations (including Professional Statutory Recognised Body requirements)

N/A

9. For apprenticeships in England, summary of how the End Point Assessment (EPA) links to the academic award
(

N/A

10. Methods for evaluating and improving the quality and standards of teaching and learning including the student experience

All HE programmes at SWC are subject to the Quality Management and Enhancement processes. In line with FHEQ Benchmark Statements (2024), the following processes are in place:

- Internal verification/moderation, cross marking and external examining processes used to ensure validity and reliability of assessment process.
- Staff/Student Consultative Committee meetings and SWC student focus groups provide the means of highlighting any difficulties, relating to the course, experienced by the cohort.
- Learners complete a module evaluation at the end of each module, each semester/year and at the end of the programme.
- The Course Committee considers learner feedback from each module.
- Annual Course Review procedures consider quantitative and qualitative feedback and formulate action plans.
- Staff appraisal is carried out on a two-year cycle with attention given to the development needs of the individual staff member.
- The College will annually complete the OU course review & evaluation documentation, if applicable.
- The College has a Staff Development Programme, which facilitates specific training/development for staff.
- All staff are encouraged to complete Information & Learning Technology qualifications.
- Views of external examiners are considered, and SWC/OU reporting mechanisms are/will be followed.
- Informal views and formal written feedback are considered from Employers via the Industrial Advisory Board.
- Learner performance data and career progression is annually monitored.
- Peer observation and assessment has been introduced to assessment matrix.

All team members must attend programme specific team meetings during the year, all with pre-set agendas and the Course Directors must attend Higher Education Committee Meetings, which consider quality management. All new staff to the programme are supplied with a dedicated mentor and a full induction, with extra supervision over their first year in many forms such as Teaching & Learning Mentors and additional peer observations.

11. Changes made to the programme since last (re)validation

The course team have collectively reviewed all modules since the last validation and factored in lessons learned through delivery of the course over the past five years. In year one there has been a specific focus on pathway specialisation in a more significant manner earlier in the programme. The movement of 3D modelling into semester one for game design students provides them with a practical focus much earlier in the course than previously. This has been something brought up frequently by students in discussions. The removal of the preproduction module has allowed more subject specific content to be brought forward while still maintaining this vital skillset inherent in all production modules. Digital film making also provides students with an early introduction to key practical skills and allows them to relate theories back to

practical implementation much sooner. Having a dedicated texturing module takes the pressure off students in that they no longer have to learn and successfully master all elements of asset creation within a single module. There has been a diversification of assessment methods with video essays and production diaries gaining greater prominence in assessment. These methodologies allow students to reflect on core theories and practical techniques in a much more meaningful way than perhaps a traditional essay-based assessment would allow. While academic writing is still a very present aspect of the course, the use of industry standard reflective practitioner approaches has been much sought after by students.

Annexe 1: Curriculum map

Annexe 2: Curriculum mapping against the apprenticeship standard or framework (delete if not required.)

Annexe 3: Notes on completing the OU programme specification template

Annexe 1 - Curriculum map

This table indicates which study units assume responsibility for delivering (shaded) and assessing (✓) particular programme learning outcomes.

Please amend this mapping to suit frameworks used within the different nations if appropriate.

Level	Study module/unit	A1	A2	A3	A4	A5	A6	A7	A8	B1	B2	B3	B4	B5	B6	B7	B8	C1	C2	C3	C4	C5	C6	C7	C8	D1	D2	D3	D4	D5	D6	D7	Available as single registerable module?
4	Visual Aesthetics (M)	x	x			x				x		x	x							x	x	x				x							No
	Specialist Media Studies (M)	x	x		x					x	x		x																x	x	x		No
	3D Modelling Fundamentals (PS)	x	x	x	x					x	x	x	x					x	x	x	x	x				x	x		x	x	x		No
	Introduction To Film Production (PS)	x	x	x						x	x	x						x	x							x	x			x			No
	Sound Design for Visual Media Arts (M)	x	x		x	x				x	x	x	x					x	x	x	x						x	x	x				No
	Post- Production and VFX (M)		x		x					x		x	x					x	x		x					x	x						
	Cinematography (PS)			x	x	x					x	x						x		x	x					x	x			x	x		No
	Texturing For Games (PS)	x	x	x	x	x				x	x	x	x					x	x	x	x	x				x	x		x	x	x		No

Level	Study module/unit	A1	A2	A3	A4	A5	A6	A7	A8	B1	B2	B3	B4	B5	B6	B7	B8	C1	C2	C3	C4	C5	C6	C7	C8	D1	D2	D3	D4	D5	D6	D7	Available as single registerable module?
5	Writing Narrative For Visual Media Arts (M)	x	x							x	x		x					x	x	x						x	x		x	x			No
	Lighting & Rendering For Games (PS)			x	x	x	x			x	x	x		x				x	x	x	x	x				x	x			x	x		No
	Advanced 3D Modelling (PS)				x	x				x	x	x						x	x	x						x			x	x			No

Module																												
Documentary Production (PS)	x	x		x	x				x						x	x	x	x					x	x	x		x		No
Photography (PS)	x	x	x					x	x	x	x	x				x	x					x	x		x				No
Work Based Learning (M)			x	x	x	x			x	x	x	x			x	x	x			x			x		x			x	No
Professional Development & Practice (M)			x					x	x	x	x	x			x	x	x	x	x				x	x		x	x		No

Annexe 3: Notes on completing programme specification templates

1 **-** This programme specification should be mapped against the learning outcomes detailed in module specifications.

2 – The expectations regarding student achievement and attributes described by the learning outcome in section 3 must be appropriate to the level of the award within the **QAA frameworks for HE qualifications**:
http://www.qaa.ac.uk/AssuringStandardsAndQuality/Pages/default.aspx

3 – Learning outcomes must also reflect the detailed statements of graduate attributes set out in **QAA subject benchmark statements** that are relevant to the programme/award: http://www.qaa.ac.uk/AssuringStandardsAndQuality/subject-guidance/Pages/Subject-benchmark-statements.aspx

4 – In section 3, the learning and teaching methods deployed should enable the achievement of the full range of intended learning outcomes. Similarly, the choice of assessment methods in section 3 should enable students to demonstrate the achievement of related learning outcomes. Overall, assessment should cover the full range of learning outcomes.

5 - Where the programme contains validated **exit awards** (e.g. CertHE, DipHE, PGDip), learning outcomes must be clearly specified for each award.

6 - For programmes with distinctive study **routes or pathways** the specific rationale and learning outcomes for each route must be provided.

7 – Validated programmes delivered in **languages other than English** must have programme specifications both in English and the language of delivery.