MSc Creative Technologies

Programme Specification

Primary Purpose

Course management and quality assurance.

Secondary Purpose

Detailed information for students, staff and employers. Current students should refer to the related Course Handbook for further detail.

Disclaimer

The University of Portsmouth has checked the information given in this Programme Specification. We will endeavour to deliver the course in keeping with this Programme Specification; however, changes may sometimes be required arising from annual monitoring, student feedback, review and update of units and courses. Where this activity leads to significant changes to units and courses, there will be prior consultation of students and others, wherever possible, and the University will take all reasonable steps to minimize disruption to students. It is also possible that the University may not be able to offer a unit or course for reasons outside of its control, for example; the absence of a member of staff or low student registration numbers. Where this is the case, the University will endeavour to inform applicants and students as soon as possible. Where appropriate, the University will facilitate the transfer of affected students to another suitable course.

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Contents

Course Details

1. Named Awards

MSc Computer Animation

MSc Computer Games Technology

MSc Film and Television

MSc Music Technology

2. Course Code (and UCAS Code if applicable)

C2714F, C2714P

3. Awarding Body

University of Portsmouth

4. Teaching Institution

University of Portsmouth

5. Accrediting Body

None

6. QAA Benchmark Groups

Adapted for Postgraduate from:

Communication media, film and cultural studies 2016

7. Document Control Information

Version 2, September 2017

8. Effective Session

2017/2018

9. Author

Dr Brett Stevens

10. Faculty

Creative and Cultural Industries

11. Department

School of Creative Technologies

Curriculum

12. Educational Aims

The course aims to equip students with the technical, academic and professional skills required to pursue a career in the creative industries, focussing on Computer Animation, Computer Games,

Film and Television, and Music Technology. Within the academic environment students develop a wide range of intellectual, analytical and problem-solving skills which are then appropriately applied. This course aims to provide a framework that facilitates individual exploration and research, providing opportunities to demonstrate this knowledge within specialist areas of enquiry. Particular emphasis is placed on the individual's ability to define, implement, evaluate and reflect on subject related issues. Technological expertise and critical interrogation within their subject areas combine to locate the successful graduates at the forefront of contemporary practice.

In addition, and more generally, the course aims to:

- Provide a challenging, stimulating and self-rewarding study environment and hence provide an advanced educational experience which develops the intellectual and practical skills of the student.

- Enable students to develop specialist interests and knowledge by way of negotiated learning.

- Provide an opportunity for students to develop as critically reflective practitioners in their chosen specialism.

- Provide students with the opportunity to develop research in a critical framework of enquiry.

- Accommodate student needs in relation to maximising their career potential, or progress to higher postgraduate study, by enabling them to develop knowledge, critical understanding and advanced skills in their chosen subject area, as well as related professional and career management skills.

13. Reference Points

The MSc programme is defined by the areas of scholarship and research evident in the School of Creative Technologies, the Faculty of Creative and Cultural Industries and to a lesser extent other departments within the University. In particular, for MSc Creative Technologies, is characterised by practitioners and theoreticians exploring solutions for delivering one or more forms of media as part of the complete and integrated set of 4 bespoke MSc exit awards - MSc Computer Animation, Computer Games Technology, Music Technology and Film and Television. These areas are designed all share a common unit structure, the logic of which is to train students to make connections, to synthesise material across subject boundaries and to meet the demands of convergent media technologies in the 21st Century workplace.

The major reference points were the University of Portsmouth Curriculum Framework Document. The Framework for Higher Education Qualifications in England, Wales and Northern Ireland (2008), The Quality Assurance Agency (QAA) for Higher Education Master's degree characteristics and The UK Quality Code for Higher Education. In particular the programme has been designed with consideration to the benchmarking standards for The Quality Assurance Agency (QAA) Subject benchmark statement for Master's Degrees in Computing (2011) as well as Communication, media, film and cultural studies (June 2016).

- QAA's characteristics of graduates of specialised/advanced study masters, such as MSc, MA, MRes, typically have:
  i. subject-specific attributes
      - an in-depth knowledge and understanding of the discipline informed by current scholarship and research, including a critical awareness of current issues and developments in the subject
      - the ability to complete a research project in the subject, which may include a critical review of existing literature or other scholarly outputs.
  ii. generic attributes (including skills relevant to an employment-setting)
      - use initiative and take responsibility
      - solve problems in creative and innovative ways
      - make decisions in challenging situations
      - continue to learn independently and to develop professionally
      - communicate effectively, with colleagues and a wider audience, in a variety of media.

The Quality Assurance Agency (QAA) Subject benchmark statement: Master's Degrees in Computing (2011) suggest that students who reach master's level will be characterised by being able to:

- Demonstrate a systematic understanding of the knowledge of the domain of their programme of study, with depth being achieved in particular areas, and this should include both foundations and issues at the forefront of the discipline and/or professional practice in the discipline; this should include an understanding of the role of these in contributing to the effective design, implementation and usability of relevant computer based systems.

- Demonstrate a comprehensive understanding of the essential principles and practices of the domain of the programme of study including current standards, processes, principles of quality and the most appropriate software support; the reason for their relevance to the discipline and/or professional practice in the discipline and an ability to apply these.

- Consistently produce work that applies and is informed by research at the forefront of the developments in the domain of the programme of study. This should demonstrate critical evaluation of aspects of the domain including appropriate software support, the ability to recognise opportunities for (software or hardware) tool use as well as possible tool improvement, an understanding of the importance of usability and effectiveness in computer systems development, and generally the acquisition of well-developed concepts.

- Understand and be able to participate within the professional, legal and ethical framework within which they would have to operate as professionals in their area of study and this includes being familiar with, and being able to explain, significant applications associated with their programme of study and being able to undertake continuing professional development as a self-directed lifelong learner across the elements of the discipline.

- Demonstrate the ability to apply the principles and practices of the discipline in tackling a significant problem. The solution should demonstrate a sound justification for the approach adopted as well as a self-critical evaluation of effectiveness but also a sense of vision about the direction of developments in aspects of the discipline.

The Quality Assurance Agency (QAA) Subject benchmark statement: Communication, Media, Film and Cultural Studies (2016) suggests graduates in the subject area should have (but not in all categories):

- knowledge of the central role that communications, media and cultural agencies play at local, national, international and global levels of economic, political and social organisation, along with the ability to explore and articulate the implications of this

- awareness of the historical formation of their particular objects of study, and their contexts and interfaces

- knowledge of appropriate research practices, procedures and traditions, and some awareness of their strengths and limitations

- awareness of the diversity of approaches to understanding communication, media and culture in both historical and contemporary contexts, and of the uses and implications of these approaches

- knowledge of a range of texts, genres, aesthetic forms and cultural practices, and the ability to produce close analysis of these, and to make comparisons and connections

- engagement with forms of critical analysis, argument and debate, expressed through an appropriate command of oral, written and other forms of communication

- understanding of production processes and professional practices within media, cultural and communicative industries

- critically informed competency in the management and operation of production technologies, procedures and processes

- the ability to engage with and to advance creative processes in one or more forms of media or cultural production

- knowledge of a range of communicative situations and cultural practices, along with the ability to produce detailed analyses of these, and to make comparisons and connections

- the ability to consider views other than their own, and exercise a degree of independent and informed critical judgement in analysis the ability to work across a variety of group and independent modes of study, and within these to demonstrate flexibility, creativity and the capacity for critical self-reflection
- the ability to use their knowledge and understanding of communication, cultural and media processes as a basis for the examination of policy and ethical issues, whether in the public domain or in other aspects of democratic participation and citizenship.

14. General Learning Outcomes

<u>Level 7</u>

Master's degrees/Postgraduate Certificates/Postgraduate Diplomas are awarded to students who have demonstrated:

- a systematic understanding of knowledge, and a critical awareness of current problems and/or new insights, much of which is at, or informed by, the forefront of their academic discipline, field of study or area of professional practice
- a comprehensive understanding of techniques applicable to their own research or advanced scholarship
- originality in the application of knowledge, together with a practical understanding of how established techniques of research and enquiry are used to create and interpret knowledge in the discipline
- conceptual understanding that enables the student:
  - to evaluate critically current research and advanced scholarship in the discipline
  - to evaluate methodologies and develop critiques of them and, where appropriate, to propose new hypotheses

Typically, holders of the qualification will be able to:

- deal with complex issues both systematically and creatively, make sound judgements in the absence of complete data, and communicate their conclusions clearly to specialist and non-specialist audiences
- demonstrate self-direction and originality in tackling and solving problems, and act autonomously in planning and implementing tasks at a professional or equivalent level
- continue to advance their knowledge and understanding, and to develop new skills to a high level

And holders will have:

- the qualities and transferable skills necessary for employment requiring:
  - the exercise of initiative and personal responsibility
  - decision-making in complex and unpredictable situations
- the independent learning ability required for continuing professional development

15. Learning Outcomes

A. Knowledge and Understanding of:

A.1   Ideas, concepts and arguments developed at an advanced level in the field of study.

A.2   Managing the research and development processes and the generation of innovative approaches.

A.3   Advanced specialist knowledge in the area researched, including production processes or specialist hardware technologies, software techniques and programming requirements.

A.4   The organisation of workflow in terms of concept development, planning, management, testing, and troubleshooting.

A.5   A5. Research methodologies, including data collection and analysis, ethical considerations and professional practice in relation to the field of study.

B. Cognitive (Intellectual or Thinking) Skills, able to:

B.1   Gather, integrate and organise material, and critically evaluate its significance for application in self-directed and original ways for the effective solution of a problem.

B.2   Critically evaluate professional practice and methodologies.

B.3   Critically analyse the suitability of software and hardware for use in the generation and presentation of developed artefacts and, where applicable, reference personal resourcefulness and technical troubleshooting in overcoming possible constraints.

B.4   Monitor and identify the progression through different technical tasks, indicating where new understanding is distinguished from existing knowledge.

B.5   Critically appraise the methods of research related to the field of study and apply appropriate techniques of analysis to their own research.

B.6   Critically reflect on the process of continued self-development in professional practice.

C. Practical (Professional or Subject) Skills, able to:

C.1   Carry out an extended piece of independent research by acting autonomously in planning and implementing tasks.

C.2   Initiate, develop and realise distinctive work in complex, unpredictable and specialised contexts and hence demonstrate adaptability and development of new skills for new situations.

C.3   Demonstrate, to a high level, appropriate choices of approach to the solution of a problem, be they creative, methodological or technological.

C.4   Apply appropriate analytical techniques when assessing the quality of deliverables during progression and at resolution.

C.5   Write and present materials suitable for use in industry or for academic research and publication.

C.6   Professionally present a reasoned perspective on a complex aesthetic and/or technological problem to an informed audience and be able to respond appropriately to critical review.

D. Transferable (Graduate and Employability) Skills, able to:

D.1   Communicate effectively in writing, speaking and in appropriate forms of presentation.
D.2   Read and understand complex documents, including those related to humanities, social science and technology.
D.3   Use IT to assist in presentations, demonstrations and communications.
D.4   Explore complex domains and develop viable solutions.
D.5   Build on previous achievements in order to generalise.
D.6   Strategically plan, successfully manage and resolve dynamically complex work.
D.7   Reflexively pursue academic, professional and career aspirations.

16. Learning and Teaching Strategies and Methods

The initial taught core knowledge and skills, in the use of research methodologies and the management of a research project, will be acquired through class based lectures, individual tutorials, seminar sessions and self-directed study. However, students engage in individual self-directed projects in order to pursue their own advanced subject specialist research as a central tenet of the programme. The development of subject knowledge and skill will be supported by supervisor led seminars and visits from industry professionals and researchers, as well as peer-critical review.

However, it is expected that students identify gaps in their own knowledge and access the resources available within the School or University; either technical, human or scholastic (by attending lectures or workshops on topics as appropriate). These activities will then provide the basis on which to build more advanced knowledge and skills.

In the initial (taught) part of the programme, lectures, seminars and tutorials support the advancement of methodological and analytical skills, whilst critical engagement, analysis and evaluation shall be further developed through planning, production and evaluation of the individual self-directed project. Peer-critical review will be a key component to reinforce reflective and critical skills.

The initial (taught) part of the programme will underpin key professional skills, including conducting of a research programme. However, professional and technical skills and good scholarship will also be developed through self-directed research, supported by discussion with project supervisors (and other staff and possibly clients). This could be supplemented by activities such as commercial visits, attendance at student conferences or other events, visiting speakers, etc. so that students are exposed to a range of relevant professional experiences.

The initial (taught) part of the programme will underpin key professional skills, including self-awareness, communication and career management skills. These skills, along with complex problem solving skills, are also developed through self-directed research.

17. Assessment Strategy

The core methodological knowledge will be assessed through presentations and reports. The research programme's advanced research and development work is summatively assessed through presentations of the work, research papers or technical reports and reflective review.

Cognitive abilities will be evidenced through written materials. Formal project proposals, including project plans, the completed artefacts, research/development papers and reflective reports will together form the assessment. However, presentations during the programme will also allow the development of students' ability to contextually position and justify the work.

A reasoned and critical approach to professional practice will be evidenced through both written and presentation assessments. Formal project proposals will assess the project definition phase, whilst research /development reports and presentations and demonstrations of artefacts will evidence the appropriate practical skills. Clarity in dissemination of ideas will also be assessed in reports and artefact presentations

Technical, practical and personal skills will be assessed by presentations, research / development papers and reflective reports. Project skills will be assessed by means of the formal project definition document and final reflective report.

Although the programme is primarily arranged around a significant individual project, a schedule of different assessment deliverables is embedded within the programme's units. The assessment strategy closely matches the teaching and learning approach, which is to provide students with a three-phase structure to assist in the development of their project ideas from conception to resolution. However, in addition to a critical understanding of the relevant creative/technical domain, the programme also aims to foster a professional approach to research/development projects and a contextual awareness of the environment, in which the student is situated.

In phase 1 (Teaching block 1 in Year 1 full time: Teaching blocks 1 and 2 in Year 1 part time) the taught unit extends the individual students' core research, organisational and professional skills. Thus, the assessed Personal Attainment Review components are used as the vehicle for driving learning. This has a portfolio of separate activities and an associated reflective report, supported by an individual presentation. These indicate the acquisition of scholarly and professional skills (including career management), and provides support for the self-directed Project Context and Definition unit. This assessment serves a two-fold purpose. The major aim of the written assessment will focus on the content and context of the student's anticipated deliverables, including validating the project's creative/ technical direction and methodological approach. To support this, the work is contextualised and grounded by an ethical review and a demonstration of a proof of concept artefact, to an audience of peers and staff. However, the structure of the written report will

also foster the student's ability to critically apply the taught methods as a framework for planning their own research and development programme.

In phase 2 (Teaching block 2 in Year 1 full time : Teaching block 3 in Year 1 and Teaching block 1 in Year 2 part time), the significant individual and self-directed project is continued. The assessment's focus is on the design and development stages of the programme, resulting in the final artefact to be demonstrated. This will by critiqued to provide feedback on its suitability, originality and innovation before more formal evaluation. This will be delivered through a student conference in the post-Easter period, with an invited audience of peers, staff and subject experts as appropriate.

In phase 3 (Teaching block 3 in Year 1 full time: Teaching blocks 2 and 3 in Year 2 part time) the self-directed project is resolved. The final artefact will be evaluated and redeveloped or clarified as necessary. The final report will demonstrate the acquisition of Master's level skills and knowledge. This report will assess the student in their ability to utilise an appropriate methodology to evaluate their artefact, and also demonstrate that they have achieved an appropriate standard of professionalism in terms of artefact quality and academic scholarship. Moreover, a reflective component will encourage critical self-review and demonstrate an awareness of current strengths and weakness, both technically and professionally.

18. Course Structure, Progression and Award Requirements

See [Unit Web Search](https://www.port.ac.uk/unitwebsearch)[1] for full details on the course structure and units

This is a 1-year full-time or 2-year part-time programme leading to the award of MSc Computer Animation, MSc Computer Games Technology, MSc Music Technology or MSc Film and Television. The exit award will be determined by the nature of the project undertaken. The taught element of the course consists of one 30 credit point unit, which represents 300 hours of study time and usually includes 48 hours of timetabled activities. The course offers a total of 180 credits for the award, made up of individually negotiated self-directed project work, supervised by an academic in the School of Creative Technologies.

Standard University rules apply – the regulations must be consulted for a full description of exit awards.

Students who have been assigned at least 60 credits at Level 7 are eligible to exit with a Postgraduate Certificate (PgCert) Creative Technologies. Students who have been assigned at least 120 credits at Level 7 are eligible to exit with a Postgraduate Diploma (PgDip) Creative Technologies.

19. Employability Statement

The programme contains a taught unit specifically design to underpin the development of Graduate Academic and Employability skills, and so students must explicitly demonstrate Career management and Research skills (including primary research) as well as Management of Self and Tasks (including Study and self-management skills, Critical thinking and reflective skills and Problem-solving and creativity skills), although these will also be developed during the project based units. Moreover, the assessments for the programme explicitly assess Management and Communication of Knowledge and Information, whilst presentations and artefact demonstrations develop Oral communication skills. Interpersonal skill will be implicitly involved at all stages, for peer critiques, discussion and formative feedback.

Career management activities initiated in the taught unit will be returned to again in the post-Easter period, both times supported by the personal tutoring system and Department of Employability.

[1] www.port.ac.uk/unitwebsearch

Course Management

20. Support for Student Learning

- The Course is managed by a Course Leader
- Each student has a personal tutor, responsible for pastoral support and guidance.
- A dedicated Study Support Centre run from within the department for additional support with assessments and tutoring.
- University support services include careers, financial advice, housing, counselling etc.
- The Academic Skills Unit (ASK).
- CCi Creative Skills Centre and CCi Academic Skills Centre.
- CCi Creative Careers Centre.
- The Additional Support and Disability Advice Centre (ASDAC).
- Excellent library facilities.
- Student course and unit handbooks provide information about the course structure and University regulations etc.
- Key skills opportunities are incorporated into all units.
- Written feedback is provided for all assessments.
- Personal Development Planning (PDP) for all awards.
- All units are managed and supported in the VLE, in accordance with the University's policy on e-learning.
- A wide range of technical resources including industry-standard professional filming equipment that includes: super 35mm digital cinematography cameras, DSLR cameras, multi-track location audio recorders, Avid Media Composer editing facilities, a multi-camera TV studio.
- Accreditation with Avid to offer editing certification in Avid Media Composer.
- Game Development Laboratory with console development kits.
- A Game-play Laboratory with gaming stations (networked).
- Software for game development (such as Visual Studio .NET and 3D Studio Max) available on university computers in the multimedia and Game Development Laboratory.
- Virtual Reality Laboratory containing a virtual reality cave (front and sides), magnetic tracking and a range of different haptic devices.
- Head Mounted Display devices for VR and 3D Film viewing.
- Optical Motion Capture facility.
- Sound Studios and Mac laboratory with music software (such as ProTools and Max-MSP).
- Production Studios with easels, graphics tablets and light boxes.

21. Admissions Criteria

A. Academic Admissions Criteria

A minimum of a second-class honours degree in a relevant subject such as TV and Film Production, broadcasting, moving image, animation, computer animation, games technology, digital media, sound technology, music or computing. Relevant equivalent professional experience and/or qualifications will be considered. An online portfolio submission may be required as part of the selection process.

Applicants whose first language is not English must provide evidence of English language ability with a minimum IELTS score of 6.5 (normally with not less than 6.0 in any one component) or equivalent.

Prior (formal and/or experiential) learning may be assessed and accredited.

In addition, to the general Academic Admissions Criteria, applicants may need to:

- Submit a definition of the area of interest and possible research question for agreement by the course leader.
- Submit evidence of competency in that area by means of an audit of the applicant's existing skills, and evidence of their practice in the form of a portfolio.

B. Disability

The University makes no distinction in its admissions policy with regard to disability and will endeavour to make all reasonable adjustments in order to make it possible for students to study at Portsmouth on a course of their choice.

22. Evaluation and Enhancement of Standards and Quality in Learning and Teaching

A. Mechanisms for Review and Evaluation

- Course Leader's Annual Standards and Quality Evaluative Review
- Head of Department's Annual Standards and Quality Evaluative Review
- Unit and Course Level student feedback considered at Board of Studies
- Unit Assessment Board consideration of student performance for each programme
- Annual Standards and Quality Reports to Board of Studies, including consideration of Subject and Award External Examiner Reports
- Periodic Programme Review
- Student Representatives and Student/Staff Consultative Committees
- National Student Survey
- National Postgraduate Taught Experience Survey
- Staff Performance and Development Review
- Peer Review and Development Framework
- Faculty Learning and Teaching Committee

B. Responsibilities for Monitoring and Evaluation

- Unit Co-ordinators for unit content and delivery
- Course Leader for day-to-day running of course
- Board of Studies with overall responsibilities for operation and content of course
- Head of Department
- Associate Dean (Academic)
- Associate Dean (Students)
- Quality Assurance Committee
- Unit, Award and Progression Board of Examiners

C. Mechanisms for Gaining Student Feedback

- Student Representation on Board of Studies
- Student Staff Consultative Committees
- Unit and Course Level student feedback questionnaires
- University participates in external student surveys, e.g. National Student Survey (NSS), Postgraduate Taught Experience Survey (PTES), Postgraduate Research Experience Survey (PRES) and International Student Barometer (ISB)

D. Staff Development Priorities

- Academic staff undertake activities related to research, scholarship, teaching and learning and student support and guidance

- Annual staff performance and development reviews match development to needs
- Managers undertake a variety of management development programmes
- New academic staff required to undertake appropriate University of Portsmouth learning and teaching programmes
- All academic staff encouraged to seek Higher Education Academy membership
- Academic staff undertake initial and continuing professional development within the Academic Professional Excellence Framework (APEX) programme which is aligned with the Higher Education Academy (HEA)'s UK Professional Standards Framework (UKPSF)
- Support staff are encouraged to attend short courses in areas such as minute taking, and specific IT packages

23. Assessment Regulations

The current University of Portsmouth academic regulations will apply to this programme (*see Assessment and Regulations[2]*).

24. Role of Externals

Subject External Examiners who will:
- Oversee unit assessment and usually attend Unit Assessment Boards
- Review unit assessment strategy
- Sample assessment artefacts
- Present report to Unit Assessment Boards

Award External Examiners (usually also a Subject External Examiner) who will:
- Oversee and attend Award/Progression Boards
- Scrutinise and endorse the outcomes of assessment
- Ensure that the standard of the award is maintained at a level comparable with that of similar awards elsewhere in the United Kingdom

25. Indicators of Standards and Quality

A. Professional Accreditation/Recognition

None.

B. Periodic Programme Review (or equivalent)

The course will be subject to normal monitoring and review policy and procedures.

Two Masters programmes in the School of Creative Technologies participated in a successful Periodic Programme Review on 5th March 2014 (MSc Computer Animation and MSc Computer Games Technology). The MSc Music Technology (formerly MSc Computational Sound) participated in a successful Periodic Programme Review on 21st March 2016. The MSc Film and Television was approved on 26th January 2015. These programmes have been combined into the MSc Creative Technologies.

C. Quality Assurance Agency

QAA Higher Education Review, March 2015, judgements about standards and quality meet UK expectations (*for full report see Higher Education Review of the University of Portsmouth, March 2015[3]*).

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[2] www.port.ac.uk/departments/services/academicregistry/qualitymanagementdivision/assessmentandregulations/

[3] www.qaa.ac.uk/en/ReviewsAndReports/Documents/University%20of%20Portsmouth/University-of-Portsmouth-HER-15.pdf

D. Others

None.

26. Further Information

Further information may be found in:

- Student Handbook
- University of Portsmouth Curriculum Framework Document
- University of Portsmouth Prospectus
- [University of Portsmouth](#)[4] and [School of Creative Technologies](#)[5] websites
- [etCeTera](#)[6]

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[4] www.port.ac.uk/

[5] www.port.ac.uk/school-of-creative-technologies/

[6] www.ceetee.net/