



East Park Terrace
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www.solent.ac.uk

BA (HONS) CGI AND VISUAL EFFECTS

Congratulations on joining us on the BA (Hons) CGI and Visual Effects degree at Southampton Solent University. My team and I extend you a warm welcome and look forward to working with you on this exciting, challenging and valuable chapter in your life, as you grow to become a fully industry-ready CGI/VFX Artist.

In this, your first year, we will help you build a strong foundation in knowledge and skills across all areas of CGI and Visual Effects ready for you to evolve into whichever specialist area you choose by the end of Year 3. We are strongly industry focused so you will get to hear from and chat to many people from industry throughout the three years, weekly at our Forums and at our annual industry events too.

In readiness for your journey with us, we'd like to give you a little more detail regarding our expectations and recommendations, so that you perhaps feel a little more prepared when you first start.

COMPUTER / LAPTOP

It is useful to have your own computer as you will need to do a fair amount of work outside the classroom every week. Our normal recommendation is that, if possible, you use an existing PC or laptop for your first year as the software will likely run quite adequately with the level of work you will be doing. Then, as you go into the second year and have more idea of the kind of area you want to focus on, you can choose to buy a computer spec'd to suit your needs.



To start off, we recommend a Windows-based machine ideally less than three years old, and you will need around 300-500GB of free hard disk space. You will also need an integrated webcam and mic for the times when our weekly Forum and Rushes sessions are on-line.

If you don't have access to a laptop or desktop of your own, we have bookable hi-spec PCs in the library which have all the CGI/VFX software installed. Also, the specialist PC classrooms are open-access one day each week for you to work on your weekly tasks and you can generally come and work in the classrooms quietly at the back when lessons are going on too.



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SOFTWARE

We use industry standard software throughout the course, and while this can be expensive for professionals, the majority is available free for student use. We will give you more information on where to download the applications during Welcome Week.



In the first year, we will start teaching primarily based on Autodesk's 3ds Max software. This is free for students; all you need to do is register with your university email when you enrol and download the application.



You will also learn The Foundry's visual effects software, Nuke. The Nuke subscription is free, using licence codes that we provide each year.



Real-time technology is increasingly being used across the CGI and VFX industries as well as in games and virtual production. We use UE5, which is also free.



If you want Adobe products at home, you can get a student subscription rate. You will likely use Photoshop, Substance and Premiere Pro during the course.

Through the degree, you may want to explore a range of different applications (there are lots to choose from), and in many cases you will get free student licences or a free trial. What software you decide to explore will vary according to what direction your studies take, but we would recommend not trying to learn everything at once! It is important to learn the foundations first.

YOUR COMMITMENT

Going to university is an exciting time with many opportunities to make new friends, take up new hobbies or sports, get part time work, and live away from home. We encourage you to make the most of all these things – just don't forget the main reason you are here! You should plan for a weekly commitment of 20-30 hours per week for your studies, around which you can easily fit everything else university life has to offer.



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You will be in for three days per week plus any time you want to use our open access facilities. We teach our modules in 6-week blocks. This is a great way to learn as you get fully immersed into each topic, and it is much closer to the way you would work once you graduate.

At the core of our course, we have weekly Rushes sessions attended by all students on the course where we peer review work from across the modules as well as our weekly Forum sessions with a range of different guest speakers. We also have CGFX – our annual guest speaker event, Industry Week – masterclasses from industry and a London studio trip, and our End of Year Show.

STUDENT PERKS



As part of your enrolment at Solent University, you will get free access to all the LinkedIn Learning courses for the duration of your course. These can be a great way to help you explore new or alternate software and really complement the class teaching.

You will get an Office 365 Account which means you can download and use all the Office apps for free, and you have 1TB of cloud storage on OneDrive which you can sync between your own computer and the classroom. We recommend this as your main storage / backup solution whilst at university.



Most importantly, you have access to a wide variety of industry standard equipment that you can use for free as a student both in modules and for your own projects. So, if you want to 3D-scan a location, prop or person; you want to record some motion capture animation for your latest character model; or use VP stage or XR green screen studio, just ask and your course team can help set this up. You can also work alongside students from other courses sharing your expertise in yet more specialist equipment available on their courses.





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THE TEAM

Finally, we'd like to introduce ourselves and say how much we are looking forward to meeting you and all the other new students this year. We hope you will find as much passion for this subject as we have.

Yours in anticipation,

Ken

Ken Pitts – Course Leader

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The CGI/VFX team: Ken Pitts, Alex Scott, Yulia Gleed, Mark Lloyd, Aneta Postek, Jules Pettitt

