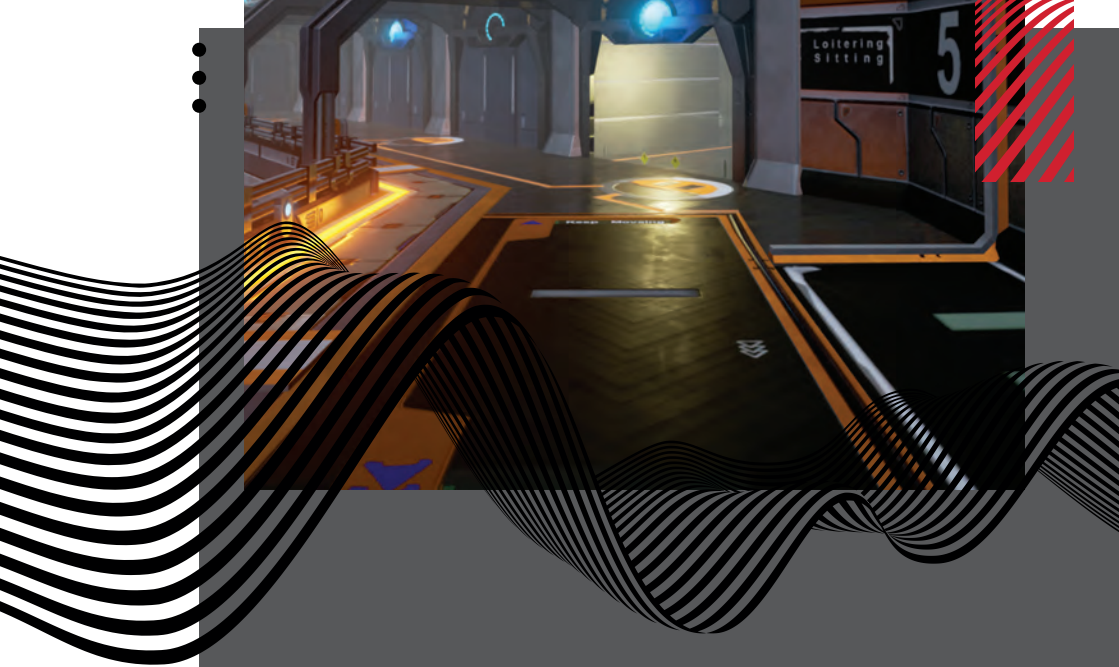


SOLENT
UNIVERSITY
SOUTHAMPTON

www.solent.ac.uk

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24



Digital arts, animation, games and VFX

2024 undergraduate courses



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Exciting industries	1
Specialist facilities	2
Our great city	5
BA (Hons) Animation	6
BA (Hons) Computer Games (Art)	8
Virtual production studio	10
BSc (Hons) Computer Games Programming and Design	12
BA (Hons) CGI and Visual Effects	16
BA (Hons) Digital and Games Art (Top-up)	18
Course list	20

Do you dream of bringing your artistic skills to life in games, CGI, VFX or animation?

Solent's industry-focused degrees help you to develop your creative passions and build a professional portfolio in 3D modelling, texturing, lighting, effects, compositing, motion capture or traditional animation to prepare you for an exciting career.

Our experienced course teams help to develop the next generation of artists for an expanding industry across gaming, film, TV and advertising, as well as emerging markets in simulation, virtual and augmented reality, visualisation, virtual production and many other prosperous industries.



Specialist facilities

Solent's media facilities are home to a range of high-spec studios equipped with dedicated computers and the latest professional software packages for VFX, gaming and animation.

You will have access to our render farm, dedicated to creating high-quality CPU and GPU renders across CGI, animation and games.

Our collaborative studios mean you can work with students across film and television using top industry cameras such as the Arri Alexa Mini or Sony FX9 to reflect modern industry practice.

CGI and visual effects

Make use of our brand new virtual production stage - cutting edge technology with an LED wall and ceiling and tracking markers that work with game engines to create amazing shots such as those seen in Disney's *The Mandalorian* and Kenneth Branagh's *Murder on the Orient Express*.

A photogrammetric DSLR body scanner and Vicon mocap system enables you to create highly detailed animated digital humans for use across the CGI industries.

The Dolby Atmos cinema features a DCI-compliant Barco 2K digital projector, able to fill the 8-metre matt-white screen with the latest films, and is where we peer-review student work using the industry-standard software, Shotgrid.



Computer games

We use dedicated computer game classrooms to encourage collaborative projects across our computer games degrees. We also run a weekly student-led video games academy and regular game jams, and are currently establishing our own game research and development studio for postgraduates.

The classrooms hold the latest industry-standard software for game artists and designers including:

- Autodesk 3ds Max and Maya
- Maxon ZBrush
- Adobe Photoshop
- Substance.

High-spec hardware for game creation includes PCs capable of using RTX technology and 4K monitors ready for creating high-fidelity real-time graphics alongside the use of WACOM tablets.

All our students use game engines such as Unreal Engine 4 and 5, and Unity. Programmers and designers also have access to licensed PlayStation console development kits, VR/AR headsets and mobile handheld devices for game testing.

Animation

You'll start your animation studies at Solent with classical training in a traditional animation studio, with industry-standard equipment such as lightboxes, computers with stop-motion for model-making and free access to the Adobe Creative Suite.

Throughout your studies you will use these facilities to build up your knowledge and experience in areas such as acting for the screen, staging, design, pacing and the entire professional pipeline. You'll then graduate with a solid understanding of the industry as a whole and your role within it.







Our great city

Southampton is a city with something for everyone. Beautiful city-centre parks, an electric night-time economy and a thriving arts and music scene all meet to offer residents something truly unique. Game, Forbidden Planet, CEX and Apple are all represented on the high street.

It's also a city of Championship football, world-class sailing and international cricket. Its many pubs and clubs host breakthrough bands and DJs. Stadium acts come to the Ageas Bowl, while the O2 Guildhall hosts big names, and festivals are a regular part of our city park life.

The Solent region is going through a new wave of growth and innovation focused on the maritime, engineering and digital industries – some of the biggest and most exciting sectors in our region. And that expansion is opening up plenty of career opportunities for talented, highly skilled people like you. Solent University is a leading member of the South Coast Institute of Technology, a partnership of education providers and industry-leading employers working together to develop opportunities in the local area.

BA (Hons)

Animation

UCAS tariff: 112–128

Course page and UCAS code: www.solent.ac.uk/W615

Bring your characters to life using traditional, stop-motion or CGI animation techniques to develop your unique portfolio ready for when you graduate. Use specialist facilities to learn the full production process, from first draft storyboarding to complete productions.

Learn professional animation principles across 2D and 3D, guided by an experienced course team who will support you to create a varied skillset and gain real-world experience, to be ready for the professional industry when you graduate.

- You'll be taught by an industry-active course team with a wealth of first-hand experience to share.
- Industry projects are embedded into the course, enabling you to gain vital experience during your studies.
- You'll access a range of specialist facilities, including traditional lightboxes, special effects workshops and green-screen rooms.
- Our in-house creative agency, Solent Creatives, provides you with the chance to pitch for paid work with commercial clients – past clients have included Bear Grylls, the BBC and Southampton Airport.
- Join our active student animation society.

Suitable roles for graduates include:

Character animator, FX animation, rigger, background artist, storyboard artist, editor, director, technician, character designer, concept artist, sculptor, texture artist, video game artist.





Scott Castles

Senior Designer, Industria Studios

BA (Hons) Animation, 2013

Tell us about your current role.

Castles Create is my own creative studio which I started soon after graduating, so I was self-employed for nearly a decade. I have recently joined Industria Studios – an international content creation and multimedia marketing agency – as a senior designer.

I've taken on many projects within the marketing and communications sectors, teaming up regularly with ad agencies and content creators to deliver high-end animation and design. Most days I'm storyboarding or creating motion graphics in programs such as Cinema 4D and After Effects. I've had the pleasure of working with the likes of LEGO, Pokemon, EPIC, KING and many more.

How do you feel your studies at Solent helped prepare you for your career?

Solent gave me time. Time to fail, time to grow, within a nurturing community of like-minded students and a supportive faculty. Meanwhile, Southampton provided the backdrop for an often

much-needed distraction, with plenty to explore, creating a nice lifestyle balance.

Favourite memory from your time at Solent?

During my second year we were split into teams to work on live projects. It was great to go through the whole production pipeline and learn how the entire process worked. I think it provided great insight into the working world, and I remember learning so much from that experience.

What advice would you give to students wanting to follow in your footsteps?

Trust your own intuition. It's important to listen to the opinions of others around you, especially your tutors, but there is also a time to be confident in your own direction – the difficulty is knowing when. I believe that if you have something meaningful to contribute, and you're being honest with yourself, then you'll know to take it into consideration.

BA (Hons)

Computer Games (Art)

UCAS tariff: 112–128

Course page and UCAS code: www.solent.ac.uk/G450

Grow your artistic skills and build your professional portfolio in preparation for an exciting career in the gaming industry.

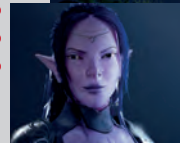
A key focus on this course is how to develop game-ready assets for computer games and real-time simulations. Using high-end facilities, create everything from character models to level design and environment rendering and textures.

At Solent, our excellent industry links help students gain opportunities to work on live briefs for real clients. In addition, our academic team is formed of professional experts who have wide-ranging experience in the gaming industry.

- Many of our graduates have gone on to work at AAA studios in the UK and across the world. These include Rockstar Games, Epic Games, Frontier Developments, Codemasters, Airship Interactive and Sumo Digital.
- Over the past five years we have had finalists in Grads in Games' Search for a Star and Rising Star competitions, including overall 'Character Art' category winners.
- Benefit from access to high-end hardware and software, including Unreal Engine 5, Maya, ZBrush, Substance Painter and Designer, and Marvellous Designer.
- Develop projects with students on other gaming courses at Solent.
- Gain industry insight from guest lecturers who are industry professionals and experts.
- Take part in a wide range of extracurricular activities with our video games academy, game jams, end-of-year graduate show and freelancing through our in-house creative agency, Solent Creatives.

Suitable roles for graduates include:

3D generalist, CGI/VFX artist, 3D animator, prop artist.



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Oliver Miles

3D Artist, Mediatonic as part of Epic Games

BA (Hons) Computer and Video Games, 2010
– now known as BA (Hons) Computer Games (Art)

How did university prepare you for your career?

I was learning how to 3D model as a hobby before I started the course, so I already had a passion for making art for games. The course helped me to build up my skill base using industry-standard tools, and to get a better understanding of game development as a whole and how the different disciplines work together when making games. I think just being around other students was a great way to bounce knowledge around and allowed me to learn a lot faster.

Tell us about your career story so far.

After graduating I moved back home and started applying for any graduate 3D artist jobs I could find. It was a challenge to find a role at first, but I kept working on my portfolio in my own time, really focusing on creating simple pieces of 3D art, but doing them well.

After two years I landed my first job at Jagex as a junior character artist. I was working on a game called *Transformers Universe* and it delivered on every expectation of what I thought a job in games would be like – I enjoyed it thoroughly. I worked there for two and a half years and learnt heaps. I then worked at Dambuster Studio in Nottingham for five months as an environment



artist. This involved working with existing assets rather than making new stuff, having joined quite late into development. I then moved back to Cambridge to work on brand-new IP for a new company at the time called PlayFusion, and for the last three years I have been working at a top company, Mediatonic as part of Epic Games, as a senior 3D character artist.

In one sentence, what is 3D art to you?

Being a 3D artist is about having the ability to be artistic while understanding the technical aspects of creating game art, in addition to having a strong problem-solving mentality.

What tips would you give to someone wanting a career in your industry?

Focus on small, simple pieces of art to go into your portfolio, but make them as close to industry standard as possible. Websites such as ArtStation and Polycount are excellent resources to see what the current quality is for game art. You have to put your own time in – a university course will show you the tools, point you in the right direction and place you with like-minded people, but you need to spend your own time mastering your trade, because if you don't, someone else will, and they'll get the job.



New virtual production stage

Training for the future of film and TV

Virtual production (VP) is the latest innovation in film and TV, made famous by Disney's hit Star Wars show *The Mandalorian* and since featured in blockbusters like *The Batman*. And our latest addition to the media facilities at Solent puts this cutting-edge technology straight into the hands of our students.





What's virtual production?

Combining real actors and cameras with large LED backdrop screens displaying a virtual location, the system uses high-spec computers running Epic's Unreal Engine 5 game engine to update the background display in real-time as the cameras move – providing a near-flawless illusion of depth and motion.

By removing a lot of the post-production work, VP offers advantages in speed of production – as well as more realistic, real-time lighting, and a more immersive, 'real' environment for actors, that allows them to engage and interact with their scene more authentically.

Our new VP stage

Costing close to a million pounds, our new virtual production stage is one of the first in the country available for student teaching, and features:

- A 10m x 3m curved LED wall
- A 4x2m LED ceiling display, for realistic overhead lighting effects
- High-spec computers running Unreal Engine 5
- Integrated camera systems

Bringing film, TV and digital arts together

Our virtual production studio provides film and TV students with fantastic new ways to bring their ideas to life – and valuable opportunities for collaboration with CGI, digital arts and computer games students in creating assets and scenes using Unreal Engine 5.

This cross-disciplinary, highly collaborative new technology is opening up new potential career paths within virtual art departments – carving out a whole new sector within the industry, creating virtual worlds.

And thanks to our new virtual studio, you'll graduate with essential hands-on experience using these cutting-edge technologies – opening up new creative avenues and really boosting your employability.

BSc (Hons)

Computer Games Programming and Design

UCAS tariff: 112–128

Course page and UCAS code: www.solent.ac.uk/CGP1

Want to turn your creative ideas into market-ready games? Work in design, development or programming, and get practical studio-style experience.

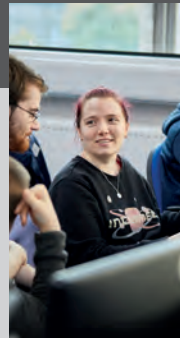
You'll be able to tailor your studies through optional modules, so that you can specialise in either game design or programming while also building a diverse array of skills across the pipeline, and gain studio experience designed to emulate a real indie studio environment.

Programming options will build the problem-solving and logic skills you need to succeed, including computational thinking, designing gameplay systems, and maths for games. On the design end, you'll learn fundamental design tools and explore how to create and prototype compelling games that engage players and build game experiences.

- Our dedicated gaming labs provide all the software you will need, including Visual Studio, Github, DirectX, OpenGL, UDK 4.0, Unity, Photoshop, 3D Studio Max, Maya and ZBrush, to name just a few.
- The course is designed to allow you to tailor your studies to suit your personal career goals, focusing on programming or design through optional modules, while giving you plenty of opportunities to collaborate with other specialists on real game projects, working in an indie studio-style environment.
- We provide opportunities to participate in a wide range of extracurricular activities: video games academy, game jams, industry talks (CGFX), end-of-year grad show and freelancing at our in-house agency, Solent Creatives.
- This course takes a project-based approach to learning, enabling you to develop projects with students on other gaming courses at Solent.

Suitable roles for graduates include:

Gameplay programmer, game designer, AI programmer, level designer, narrative designer, QA tester, animation programmer, engine programmer, game producer, software developer, mobile developer, tools programmer, audio designer, graphics programmer, UI designer, Unity/Unreal engine developer, web developer, games user researchers (GUR experts).





Jonathan Carter

Junior Programmer, Fumb Games

BSc (Hons) Computer Games (Indie),
2020 – now known as BSc (Hons)
Computer Games Programming and Design

Tell us a bit about your role and what it involves.

I currently work for a small indie game studio called Fumb Games which makes primarily merge/merge-idle games for mobile platforms. What I do day-to-day will depend on the project I am working on – sometimes programming-based, as well as delving into art and design. My normal work day can consist of programming game mechanics, implementing art assets sent from the artist on my project, laying out and implementing UI based on mock-ups, producing and testing builds, bug fixing, and so on.

How did your studies at Solent help prepare you for your career?

My studies at Solent gave me all the skills I would need to get a role such as the one I'm currently in. We were all encouraged to start early on making our portfolios with the projects we were working on as assignments, as well as to take part in game jams and competitions. This is something which really helped when it came to job hunting after graduation. The biggest help for me personally was one of my third-year modules in which the whole class worked together in one massive group, as if we were a game studio, and made a title in three to four months. The experience gained from this module was invaluable as it gave me a taste of what to expect in industry.

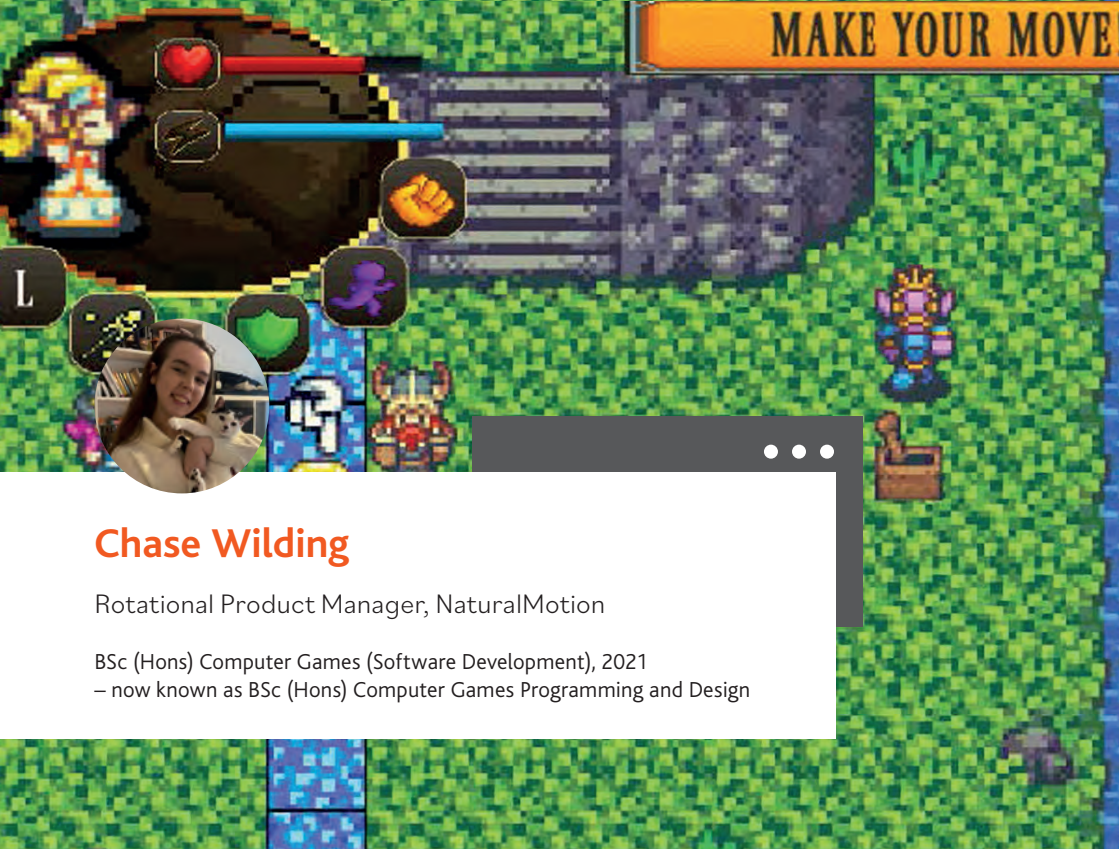


What advice would you give to those wanting to follow in your footsteps?

My advice for getting into the games industry is to keep focused on what you do, and stick with it – it will be worth it in the end. I recommend you start early on your portfolio, keep it up-to-date and take the time to present it in a clean and professional manner.

It is also a massive boost if you can find the time to work on some personal projects or game jams during your studies and beyond. Go that extra mile – it could be anything from a project showcasing a game mechanic to a small game title. One of my oldest personal projects – which I still work on to this day – started out as an experiment in editor programming from a simple audio handling solution that I learnt in a module. Go wild and have fun with it.

View Jonathan's portfolio:
<https://jonathan.carter.games/>



Chase Wilding

Rotational Product Manager, NaturalMotion

BSc (Hons) Computer Games (Software Development), 2021
– now known as BSc (Hons) Computer Games Programming and Design

Tell us about your role and what a typical day looks like for you.

I'm a rotational product manager at NaturalMotion – this is a graduate programme which has allowed me to work in the industry on live games while also learning from more experienced colleagues. Working in this role has benefited me greatly and given me many opportunities to grow in my career.

My day-to-day includes looking at our KPIs and driving our product strategy forwards by working with other disciplines to create features and improvements to our live games, with our business goals and players in mind. As a product manager I help scope and prioritise features based on their business and player impact, and use data from existing games to highlight opportunities to improve our KPIs.

Working in project management allows me to use the skills I gained from my university degree and focus on the areas I found to be my strengths. Product management isn't something that is spoken about enough in the games industry when you're trying to find what suits you the best, but I highly recommend looking into it, especially if you enjoy analysing and problem-solving.

How do you feel your studies at Solent helped prepare you for your career?

Solent allowed me to work with a variety of people on mini game projects which helped me develop both my technical and interpersonal skills. As one of only a few females on my course I was made to feel very comfortable and treated no differently from my male peers by lecturers and fellow students, which was greatly appreciated as it can be intimidating joining a new course in a field that can be male-dominated.



Solent gave me the opportunity to better myself and create a portfolio I could be proud of. The lecturers gave great advice and constantly pushed me to be my best.

Favourite memory from your time at Solent?

During my time at Solent my favourite memory was in my third year when 20 of us worked to form a game studio and created a game to a set brief. This unit not only ended in us getting a game published on Steam but allowed me to experience working in a larger group, which enabled me to develop my communication and teamwork skills. Without our lecturer's support we would not have got a game on Steam before graduation, which was a huge accomplishment. This also led to multiple memorable social sessions as we all met up on Discord once a week during the pandemic to socialise and play games together – I will forever remember the call where we stayed up when the PS5 was released.

What advice would you give to future students wanting to follow in your footsteps?

Create your portfolio. Add quality projects to your portfolio that best demonstrate your skillset. Also, take every opportunity that comes your way and make the most of group projects, as this is where I learnt the most and made some of my closest friends. Don't be afraid to reach out to people in the industry with questions. Solent has alumni working in all sorts of companies and industries (not just games), so make the most of this network.

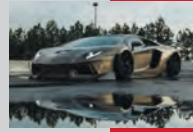
Finally, stick with it – everything is hard at first, but perseverance will pay off. Every six months, look back at how far you've come in your university journey as it's easy to forget when you're constantly learning.

BA (Hons)

CGI and Visual Effects

UCAS tariff: 112–128

Course page and UCAS code: www.solent.ac.uk/CGV1



Ranked top five in the UK with the Rookies 2021/22, this course can prepare you for the thriving and ever-expanding industries of visual effects and 3D content.

Build your digital skills through classical art techniques and procedural modelling and scripting.

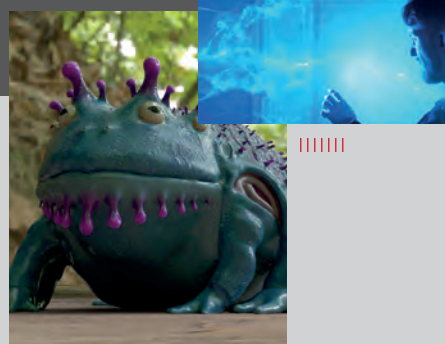
Explore 2D and 3D digital art disciplines, which lead to many exciting careers in the film, TV, advertising, video games and visualisation sectors.

Our experienced course team will support you to build industry links, and teach you the latest techniques using excellent facilities. You'll also benefit by learning from the industry masterclasses.

- Access to industry-standard software and facilities, including a 10m virtual production stage, a green screen room with tracking facilities, an in-house cinema, DSLR body scanner, a motion capture suite and Oculus and Vive VR headsets.
- A creative, multidisciplinary environment for world-leading research in media, culture and the arts – you will learn from experts in their field.
- Weekly guest speakers and our two annual events for CGI, VFX, games and animation attended by some of the industry's top experts in the field.
- Showcase your work through our annual graduate and our extensive industry network.

Suitable roles for graduates include:

3D modeller, texture artist, environment/layout artist, rigger, matchmover, roto and prep artist, compositor, assistant technical, director, on-set data capture technician, digital matte painter, FX artist, architectural visualiser, games artist, motion capture technician.





Gonçalo Ferreira

Compositor (Junior), Outpost VFX

BA (Hons) Film Visual Effects, 2022
– now known as BA (Hons) CGI and Visual Effects

Tell us about your current role.

As a compositor working on post-production for films, I am responsible for integrating 2D and 3D elements together with real-life footage, making it look as realistic as possible, according to the director's vision.

What do you enjoy most about your role?

Having the chance to work on the final look of a shot, while being able to see the results obtained from the overall team across all the stages of the pipeline.

What are the biggest challenges in your work?

In this field, time is precious, and this ends up being an everyday challenge. It is important to be aware of the targets established and be organised in order to achieve the goals within the expected time.

How do you feel your studies at Solent helped prepare you for your career?

My studies at Solent played an essential role in helping me acquire the knowledge to become a compositor. Apart from getting knowledge of the different software used in the industry, before university I had very little idea about what was involved in the production of a movie/series (from pre-production to post-production), as well as the different job roles involved and what they were responsible for. Apart from this, I developed a better understanding of what different elements such as colour, composition, light, different lenses, focal lenses, camera sensors, camera movements, and so on play

when creating an image/video. Furthermore, I got a better understanding of the vast career options available to me after graduating.

What were your favourite Solent memories?

I remember my first day at Solent as a student – how excited I was feeling and how surreal everything seemed at that time! I was amazed by the great environment of the Uni, and how lucky I was to be there.

I was nostalgic on the last day at the graduation ceremony, where I felt happy for having concluded my studies. But also it was very hard to say goodbye to my teachers and colleagues, and to all of that experience that I lived through the last three years. I am very thankful to everyone at Solent that was directly involved with my development, as without them this journey wouldn't be the same.

What advice would you give to those wanting to follow in your footsteps?

My advice is to take all the opportunities to learn something new that may be relevant to your future career, such as networking or going to the events that teachers prepare for you. Be present, put in time and effort to practise learned skills, and take the opportunity to make your dreams come true! And never forget there is help out there if you struggle!

What's next for your career?

For now, I am focused on becoming a better compositor and improving my artistic and technical skills. My long-term hope is to become a VFX supervisor.

BA (Hons)

Digital and Game Art (Top-up)

Relevant HND/foundation degree pass with merit overall (55 per cent average), or 240 CATS points from a relevant three-year degree.

Course page: www.solent.ac.uk/DGA-top-up



This course is designed for you to top up your existing qualifications to a full honours degree.

Build upon your previous studies and explore your interests to develop your own specialism within the wide subject area of digital art – and game art – in this career-driven top-up degree.

- Build upon your previous studies in film, animation, games, digital media or computer art.
- Tuition is structured to offer flexible learning experiences and networking opportunities in a career direction of your choosing.
- Work alongside Solent's CGI, animation and games students, collaborating and interacting with each other.
- You'll have access to dedicated studio spaces with a high-end suite of industry tools and software throughout your studies.

Learning on the course is highly individual due to the wide variety of career directions you can choose. Our experienced and talented lecturers guide you individually on your own learning path, supervising your project's progress as would happen in industry.

Suitable roles for graduates include:

Character designer, environment artist, animator, digital matte painter, concept artist, digital sculptor, illustrator, architectural visualiser, immersive, content creator, lighting artist.





Kamil Rochl

3D Artist, Blue Brain Games
(self-employed)

BA (Hons) Digital Arts (Top-up), 2020 –
now known as BA (Hons) Digital and Game Art
(Top-up)

Tell us about your current role.

I am currently working as 3D artist and my typical day is basically checking references I am sent. When I check the references I usually go after more references, so I get a pretty clear vision of what I have to model. Then I search for the measurements, so that it will be proportionally correct. After that, I start modelling, unwrapping and finally texturing. I export models and textures, and send them to my colleague because he works directly with Unreal Engine and is implementing my models. My goal is to fulfil 40 hours a week and do as many models as I can.

What do you enjoy most about your role, and what are the biggest challenges?

I enjoy texturing the most – for me, it is the fun part, because I can go crazy there and do lots of interesting stuff. The biggest challenges are the new things that go beyond my knowledge. The first time I encountered stuff like that it was, for example, making fishing net material, different types of cloth simulations such as carpets, pillows and mattresses, and so on. But they came out pretty well and I found my own way to make these things quickly.



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How do you feel your studies at Solent helped prepare you for your career?

I had enough time to experiment and do different types of things – and, most importantly, I had people around me who were able to help me with advice and guidance.

What advice would you give to students wanting to follow in your footsteps?

If you want to work in the games industry, it is important to stick with whatever you are doing. If you are drawing, modelling or programming, that does not matter. Just stick with it, no matter how hard it is or how hopeless you feel – even if you want to give up, stick with it.

Baby steps are important. You don't have to necessarily create a big piece of artwork from the start. Just do small tasks first; then, when you feel you can do bigger tasks, do them. If you are sick of the work you are currently working on, just do something else – it is important not to overdo stuff. Then you will feel like coming back to the previous work.

Make sure you are surrounded by people from the games industry, and talk to them – if not in person, at least via the internet. Make contacts and connections. Watch videos about the things you are interested in, not because I told you so, but because you like it.

Course list

Course	UCAS tariff points	Work placement opportunity	Foundation Year available
BA (Hons) Animation	112–128	-	Y
BA (Hons) CGI and Visual Effects	112–128	Y	Y
BA (Hons) Computer Games (Art)	112–128	-	Y
BSc (Hons) Computer Games Programming and Design	112–128	Y	Y
BA (Hons) Digital and Game Art (Top-up)	*	-	-
Foundation Year in Digital Arts	48	-	-

* Contact our admissions team for details of entry requirements: admissions@solent.ac.uk

How to apply

Solent University code name: **SOLNT**
Solent University UCAS code: **S30**



Unsure what to do with your future?

Confused about the university application process?

Follow our **52 Things To Do** guide, designed to help you every step of the way.

From thinking about the degree that's right for you to writing a personal statement, we've got it all covered – with handy advice and tasks designed to take no more than an hour each week.

Visit www.solent.ac.uk/52-things




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www.solent.ac.uk

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