

NOTTINGHAM COLLEGE



Central College
Nottingham



Course Specification

Basic Course Information

1	Awarding Institution	Nottingham Trent University
2	Faculty/Campus	Creative Arts / City
3	Final Award	Foundation Degree in Arts in Digital Design; (Web Design); (Animation and Motion Graphics); (Applications Development); (Game Art Design)
	Course Title	FdA Digital Design
	Modes of Study	Full-time; Part-time
4	Normal Duration	Full-time 2 years; Part-time 3 years
5	UCAS code	Institution Code: N30 Campus Code: C JACS Code for Pathways: W215 – Digital Design (FdA/MMD) W280 – Web Design (FdA/MWD) W610 – Animation and Motion Graphics (FdA/MAM) I150 – Applications Development (FdA/MAD) I630 – Game Art Design (FdA/MGA)

6 Overview and general educational aims of the course

The Foundation Degree Digital Design has been designed to provide you with opportunities to engage in work-related learning that will explore a variety of vocations within the digital media industries. It combines practical experience in digital media design production with a theoretical understanding of media, design, culture and information management. The course will broaden your learning experience beyond the purely vocational type training by including a wider knowledge base and research-based educational experience. In this way the course aims to provide you with a learning experience in which theory and practice influence and enrich each other.

The FdA Digital Design course aims to introduce you to the broad interdisciplinary areas of Digital Design, lens based media and communications as well as equipping you with practical skills in media technologies, such as digital imaging, website development, audio, production, photography 3D design. Transferable skills are provided in the core modules.

The course has been designed to offer you a flexible framework whilst still allowing you to specialise in your own area of production. The course structure provides an opportunity for advanced independent study offset against a framework of learning outcomes indicative of the digital media design industry. There will be a very strong focus on entrepreneurship, building business links and professionalism.

Level 4 is seen as laying the foundations for innovative exploration of ideas; ideas that have a strong historical and contextual underpinning. The core modules in Year 1 will provide you with the traditional theoretical and practical skills by which to express your ideas. Alongside key technical skills, you will be encouraged to develop and exchange ideas through a process of group critique. Level 5 focuses on your own aims and ambitions, which will reflect your graduate potential and your personal and professional career planning: knowledge as well as an understanding of the context and market for the Digital Design industry.

At Level 5 you will have the chance to gain professional experience, through involvement with client briefs and professional work. The course will culminate with your proposal and execution of your own design brief, with display of the outcome in an end of year show.

The Foundation Digital Design course offers a choice of 5 different pathways. Each pathway has a common theme. A pathway is your educational road map guiding you to a Digital Design course that is most relevant to your chosen career destination. More specifically, pathways cultivate the ability to make intentional and reflective educational choices. A Pathway will help you acquire the depth of knowledge and skill linked to a certificate and career. To see an in-depth description of the different pathways see section 10, Course structure and curriculum.

In summary, the course is designed to meet the following aims:

- To provide you with opportunities to investigate the areas of the digital media industry in which your interests and future aspirations lie, and to enable you to work with a greater expertise and understanding
- To give an overview of design industries and provide the underpinning knowledge necessary to operate effectively within the industry
- To enhance your understanding of the importance of the design sector and gaining the effective skills necessary for employment
- To integrate the specific knowledge and skills into a coherent whole, which will encourage you to view the industry holistically
- To develop your understanding of the role and standing of the industry in the broader environmental, economic, political, social and technological context.

7 Course Outcomes

The following course outcomes have been developed in line with The Quality Assurance Agency's (QAA) Foundation Degree Characteristics Statement (2015) and the QAA subject benchmark statement for Communication, media, film and cultural studies (2016).

Knowledge and understanding. By the end of the course you should be able to:

- in your chosen pathway; apply knowledge and critical understanding of the history of communication to new and emergent media forms and their relation both to their social, cultural and technological changes (**A, B**).
- in your chosen pathway; apply underlying concepts and principles outside the context in which they were first studied, including, where appropriate, the application of those principles in an employment context (**A, B**).
- in your chosen pathway; evaluate critically the appropriateness of different approaches to solving problems in the field of study (see p4), considering traditions and forms, and of their current characteristics and possible future developments(**A, B**).
- in your chosen pathway; demonstrate an understanding of the limits of your knowledge, and how this influences analyses and interpretations based on that knowledge (**A, B**).
- in your chosen pathway; articulate and synthesise their knowledge and understanding, attributes and skills in effective ways in the contexts of creative practice, collaborative projects, employment, further study, research and self-fulfilment (**A, B**).
- in your chosen pathway; use a range of established techniques to initiate and undertake critical analysis of information, and to propose solutions to problems arising from that analysis (**A, B**).

Skills, qualities and attributes. By the end of the course you should be able to:

- use a range of established techniques to initiate and undertake critical analysis of information, to propose independent Digital Design solutions, presenting reasoned arguments through reflection, review and evaluation (**A, B**).
- effectively communicate information, arguments and analysis in a variety of forms to specialist or non-specialist audiences (**A, B**).
- negotiate self-directed projects, set goals, manage their own workloads and meet deadlines considering the designer's relationship with audiences, clients, markets, users, consumers, participants, co-workers and co-creators (**A, B**).
- undertake lifelong learning, to develop existing skills and acquire new competences within the creative industries (**A, B**).
- generate and present ideas, concepts, proposals, solutions or arguments in response to independent or set assignments (**A, B**).
- consider the critical, contextual, historical, conceptual and ethical dimensions of the subject (**A, B**).
- select and employ communication and information technologies to effectively communicate information, arguments and analysis in a variety of forms to specialist and non-specialist audiences (**A, B**).
- put to use a range of information communication technology (ICT) skills from basic competences such as data analysis and word-processing to more complex skills using web-based technology or Digital Design (**A, B**).

All outcomes marked (A) are from the Foundation Degree Characteristics Statement.

All outcomes marked (B) are from the Communication, Media, Film and Cultural Studies Subject Benchmark Statement

8 Teaching and Learning Methods

The course has been designed to integrate academic study and work-related learning while you investigate and develop your own area of interest. You will also gain a greater understanding of how to develop your career within digital design industries.

The teaching and learning methods at Level 4 facilitate the discovery of key theories and principles, in acquiring basic practical and creative skills and in developing a knowledge framework with a limited amount of independence. At Level 5 the learning outcomes are geared towards industry requirements, in developing professional skills and in synthesising knowledge with independence.

Throughout the course you will develop your own area of interest within digital media, which will complement your growing design awareness. Learning activities will be planned to help you to achieve the aims of the course and individual modules. You will be encouraged to further develop independent learning skills through directed learning from module tutors and via self-directed study. Design projects are the core learning and teaching element of the course around which tutorials, critiques, group debates and technical instruction can take place.

Learning will take place through project-based enquiry, developing a capacity for independent learning and the ability to work with others. There will be a series of workshops and simulations that explore the potential of work within your areas of interest, helping develop both cognitive and practical skills. The creative potential of new technologies will also be explored alongside traditional methods. This design activity will be supported by creative reasoning in the form of debates and lectures.

A variety of teaching and learning methods will be incorporated into the course in order to ensure the coverage of all learning outcomes. Teaching methods employed by the team to deliver the course will include: lectures; seminars; educational visits; guest speakers; tutorials; peer review; collaborative work; taught/directed study; formal written assessment; self-directed independent study.

A number of design projects set throughout the course are set by industry and take the form of 'live' or 'simulated' work-related briefs or competitions.

As a digital design designer or developer, you could be involved in the design of many forms of interactive media within your chosen the field of study. The field of study, refers to the different learning outcomes that might be expected, which are relevant, to the chosen pathway in year two.

9 **Assessment Methods**

The assessment strategy has been devised in order to facilitate the learning outcomes in the module specifications. There are no formal examinations within the course and assessment of coursework takes place continuously.

A range of assessment methods is incorporated into the course to enable you to demonstrate the range of learning outcomes, for example, reports, presentations, research activities and project work.

The course focuses on the following four principles of good practice that are relevant to both education and industry:

Research

Work submitted for assessment in all instances contains research that is a continual formative benchmark.

Evidence of good research must be found in sketchbooks, pre-production material, business plans, and texts and in all instances of production. Good research exemplifies good practice and subject knowledge.

Written Material

Written work must always show that due care and attention has been paid to both detail and content, whether in use of language, grammar, or appropriate presentation format and citation.

Production

All production material must be of a high standard and should be submitted in a delivery format appropriate to the content.

Independent Learning

In every respect you will be accountable for the construction and delivery of material for assessment.

You will receive written feedback for all coursework submitted, along with a predicted grade, and staff will provide ongoing informal feedback on progress and development throughout the course. All grades and decisions will be subject to formal approval at the end of year Examination Board.

10 **Course structure and curriculum**

The course is studied on a 2 year full-time basis or 3 year part-time basis. If you choose to study the course via the 3 year part-time route you will take the core modules during years 1 and 2, with specialist pathway modules during year 3. Negotiation will take place with individual students to map out the most appropriate sequence for delivery.

At Level 4 all areas of study are covered in depth. Level 4 deals with the fundamental digital design principles and skills. The FdA Digital Design course aims to introduce you to the broad interdisciplinary areas of digital design, lens based media and communications as well as equipping you with practical skills in media technologies, such as digital imaging, website development, audio, production and 3D skills. Transferable skills are provided in the core modules. The core modules are used to build knowledge and skills and to acquire confidence to enable students to select the appropriate pathway at Level 5. Alongside the key technical skills, you will be encouraged to develop and exchange ideas through a process of group critique.

At Level 5 you will select your specialist study pathway and focus on the acquisition of skills which aid creative and intellectual development. At Level 5 the modules are geared towards industry requirements, in developing professional skills and in synthesising knowledge with independence. Level 5 focuses on your own aims and ambitions, which reflect your graduate potential and your personal and professional career planning: knowledge and skills required to work as a practitioner with communication skills as well as an understanding of the context and market for the digital design industry. At this level, knowledge and understanding of the medium will be advanced alongside evaluative skills that enable you to reflect on and critique not only your own work but also the work of others.

At Level 5 there is an emphasis on self-reflection and problem solving. Three modules at Level 5, Studio Practice, Final Major Project Proposal and Research, and Final Major Project Resolution, in particular, provide ample opportunity for you to demonstrate these outcomes. Also at Level 5 there is a substantial research essay which will allow you to communicate your views in written format and develop confidence in written communication.

Level 5 encourages exploration and application of your chosen pathway using key principles introduced at Level 4, and pathway specific methodologies introduced at Level 5. Towards the end of your Level 4 studies you will also be introduced to, and prepare for, the final part of the course when you will be required to generate your own proposals for the Final major project proposal and research. At Level 5 all students will have the chance to gain professional experience through involvement with client briefs and professional work through selection of your specialist study pathway. The course will culminate with you proposing and executing your own design brief with display of the outcome in an end of year show.

Cultural practice is central at all levels of the course. It is important that students on the course study the works of other practitioners past and present to locate their practice in an evolving historical context.

Core Modules

Level 4

Module Code	Module Title	Credit Points
MMC401	Graphic Design and Illustration	20
MMC402	Animation and 3D Design	20
MMC403	Web Design and Delivery	20
MMC404	Interactive Digital Applications	20
MMC405	Visual Culture	20
MMC406	Sound and Moving Image	20

Level 5

Module Code	Module Title	Credit Points
MMC501	Professional Practice	20
MMC502	Critical Review	20

Digital Design modules- Level 5

Module Code	Module Title	Credit Points
MMD503	Digital Design - Studio Practice	20
MMD504	Digital Design - Final Major Project Proposal and Research	30
MMD505	Digital Design- Final Major Project Resolution	30

Web Design Pathway- Level 5

Module Code	Module Title	Credit Points
MMW506	Web Design - Studio Practice	20
MMW507	Web Design - Final Major Project Proposal and Research	30
MMW508	Web Design - Final Major Project Resolution	30

Animation and Motion Graphics Pathway - Level 5

Module Code	Module Title	Credit Points
MMG509	Animation and Motion Graphics - Studio Practice	20
MMG510	Animation and Motion Graphics - Final Major Project Proposal and Research	30
MMG511	Animation and Motion Graphics - Final Major Project Resolution	30

Applications Development Pathway - Level 5

Module Code	Module Title	Credit Points
MMA515	Applications Development - Studio Practice	20
MMA516	Applications Development - Final Major Project Proposal and Research	30
MMA517	Applications Development - Final Major Project Resolution	30

Game Art Design Pathway - Level 5

Module Code	Module Title	Credit Points
MGA518	Game Art Design - Studio Practice	20
MGA519	Game Art Design - Final Major Project Proposal and Research	30
MGA520	Game Art Design - Final Major Project Resolution	30

All modules will need to be successfully completed. The final overall grade will be determined by considering 30% of Level 4 module grades and 70% of the Level 5 module grades.

Students who only successfully complete Level 4 of the course will be eligible for a Higher Certificate in Digital Design (120 credit points). Students successfully completing all required Level 4 and Level 5 modules will obtain a Foundation Degree (240 credit points).

Graduates who have successfully completed the course will be eligible for progression to ncn's BA (Hons) Digital Media Design course, validated by NTU. Alternatively, students may also choose to continue their studies at another Higher Education Institution or pursue employment in their chosen field of study.

Level 4 Core Modules

MMC401 Graphic Design and Illustration

This module aims to familiarise you with the application of applied design techniques through an understanding of the historical origins in which design and layout techniques have evolved. You will also gain practical experience in developing basic design and layout techniques and the importance of detailed research. To achieve this module you are to prove an understanding of how to analyse factors contributing to abstract visual communication.

MMC402 Animation and 3D Design

The module introduces you to the opportunity to further the computer graphics work undertaken in MMC401 with techniques for building 3D environments and evaluating a variety of tools. The module is well suited to those in the Digital Design or Computing fields who wish to investigate the use of 3D software. The module is designed to introduce the fundamental principles of animation, and establish drawing and image manipulation as integral components of the animation process.

MMC403 Web Design and Delivery

This module aims to give a theoretical and practical introduction to web site coding, including the principles of web page design. You will gain an understanding of the fundamentals of XHTML, and CSS scripting languages. You will analyse the theoretical underpinning of the Internet and its function as a means of delivery. You will also gain practical experience of working in a team, in project negotiation, website development and the final design and publishing of a web site

MMC404 Interactive Digital Applications

Introduction to the use of video, sound, animation, graphics, text and other sensory input delivered by computer, to facilitate interaction with information and experiences relating to all aspects of human endeavour. Includes the production of a digital application for a client and considers the differing roles of members of a digital design production team.

MMC405 Visual Culture

To introduce you to key aspects of the theory of information management and to critically compare that knowledge with the peculiarities of information management in the digital design industries now and in the future.

MMC406 Sound and Moving Image

The aim of this module is to introduce you to the use of video, sound, animation, graphics, text, to create rich media content for use within interactive digital design. During the module you will investigate sound-scapes, video or motion design elements to deliver via platforms such as digital versatile discs, shockwave flash or similar. You will also be

expected to analyse the social and cultural context in which these products exist.

Level 5 Core Modules

MMC501 Professional Practice

The focus of the module is personal and professional development, with the exploration ranging from the theoretical nature of knowledge and the value of experience, leading on to self-assessment and deep learning.

MMC502 Critical Review

The aim of this module is to enable you to begin a substantial independent project. The notion of refining exploratory research into the form of a Research Book, for example, is designed to help you focus on both a prolonged study of your direction within industry, and produce an in-depth critical review of work that you would like to undertake. You will produce a research book in addition to similar conceptual material in response to questions raised by the course team.

Level 5 Digital Design modules

- Digital Design - Studio Practice
- Digital Design - Final Major Project Proposal and Research
- Digital Design- Final Major Project Resolution

A fast growing specialist area with considerable opportunity for a variety of careers in the digital design industries worldwide. This is a highly creative and challenging discipline rooted within contemporary industrial practice, combining ideas generation and strong design awareness with competency in many skill areas including web design, image generation and sequencing. You will produce intellectually and creatively challenging projects with a strong practical component.

Level 5 pathway modules

Web Design

- Web Design - Studio Practice
- Web Design - Final Major Project Proposal and Research
- Web Design - Final Major Project Resolution

Web design is one of the key growth areas in graphic communication. This pathway is designed to provide you with the skills and awareness necessary for employment in digital design and related fields, with a particular emphasis towards the understanding and use of web-based communications. This pathway provide a systematic grounding in the use of XHTML and CSS, hand-coding and preparing images for the web, moving image for the web, dynamic content and the application of web design across a range of professional and commercial contexts.

Animation and Motion Graphics

- Animation and Motion Graphics - Studio Practice
- Animation and Motion Graphics - Final Major Project Proposal and Research
- Animation and Motion Graphics - Final Major Project Resolution

In this pathway you can freely develop as both an Animation/Motion Graphics designer. The pathway focuses on effective communication with an audience. The Animation and Motion Graphics pathway seeks to explore and develop creative and critical practice within

Motion Graphics. The emphasis is on building upon the foundations of your own existing portfolio of work (produced during Level 4 or past professional work).

Applications Development

- Applications Development - Studio Practice
- Applications Development - Final Major Project Proposal and Research
- Applications Development - Final Major Project Resolution

The Applications Development pathway provides an introduction to application development using the popular Adobe Air coding toolkit. It will cover an introduction to programming in Adobe Air, including image and sound manipulation, animation and interactivity. By the end of the course, you will have gained the skills and experience to create basic applications, simple games and audio/visual interactive software.

Game Art Design

- Game Art Design - Studio Practice
- Game Art Design - Final Major Project Proposal and Research
- Game Art Design - Final Major Project Resolution

The Game Art Design pathway covers the practical development of in-game content by exploring character, environment and vehicle design, including industry standard 3D modelling, mapping, materials, rigging and dynamic effects. The pathway offers an environment for developing practical skills, knowledge and understanding to develop technically accomplished artists. The course focuses on developing skills in the art and ideas of games design as an artistic and cultural form. Professional practice will be taught alongside studio practice, contextual studies and the theoretical components of the course.

11 Admission to the course

The target groups for the Foundation Degree are:

- Applicants who have gained A level or level 3 FE qualifications and wish to continue into full-time higher education
- Mature applicants employed in the Arts industries and wishing to gain the Foundation Degree by part-time study

For admission to the course you will need to have achieved 48 UCAS points from one of the following:

- Diploma in Foundation Studies Art and Design
- At least two A Levels at A2, with one in an Art and Design subject area
- Applicants who have gained A level or level 3 FE qualifications and wish to continue into full-time higher education
- BTEC Diploma or Extended Diploma in a media, IT or art and design-related subject area
- Applicants who have successfully completed an Access to HE course in a related area with a suitable academic reference
- International Baccalaureate

Other combinations of Level 3 qualifications and qualifications not currently listed on the UCAS tariff may also be considered.

Mature students with relevant experience and/or qualifications, including an Access to HE Diploma within a relevant subject area, are welcome to apply.

As part of our admissions process you will need to submit a portfolio of your recent work and may be asked to attend an interview.

International applicants will require equivalent Level 3 qualification and may require an IELTS score of at least 5.5, with no element less than 5.0, in addition to the standard entry criteria. Equivalent scores from other English language tests will be considered.

Non-UK qualifications will be assessed in comparison to their UK equivalents.

Accreditation of Prior (Experiential) Learning (APEL) will be available for applicants who have substantial experience in the media, IT or art and design sector and are able to provide evidence of their previous attainment of specific learning outcomes. Guidance will be taken from NTU's Quality Handbook relating to Accreditation of Prior Learning (APL), which includes specific guidance on APEL for admission with advanced standing. Additionally, guidance on the definitions and boundaries, policies and procedures will be taken from the UK Quality Code for Higher Education, Chapter B6: Assessment of students and the recognition of prior learning. Any APEL decisions will be formally reported to the Examination Board.

Students who have recent relevant vocational experience and who have previously covered required competences and/or underpinning knowledge and understanding will be considered as individual cases.

12 Support for learning

You will undergo a planned course of induction activities prior to the start of the course, which include induction to ncn and the course. This will include activities such as induction to the Learning Centres (Libraries) and the provision offered to support your studies, team building activities and specific course induction. You will also receive a course handbook containing important information about content and operation. You will meet the staff who teach on the course.

The induction course includes an induction to the services provided centrally by Student Services, in particular by the HE Finance and Welfare Advisor, who can offer advice on all aspects of tuition fee payment, student loans and accommodation.

All HE students have a named personal tutor who provides academic and pastoral guidance and support. An individual initial on-course tutorial will take place during the first two weeks to enable any settling-in issues to be identified and discussed. All students have a timetabled tutorial session each week; this may take the form of a group tutorial or individual tutorials. All HE students have a minimum of three individual tutorials per year where progress is discussed and targets recorded.

Your personal tutor and the Careers and Destinations Coaches at ncn can help you with careers information and advice.

ncn operates an on-line Personal Development Planning system where you can define and explore your goals and map out ways to turn them into reality. It will enable you to articulate the skills you are developing now in order to open up opportunities for the future.

ncn also has an Academic Coaching and Employability Skills (ACES) team available to provide you with academic research and study support via lectures and individual support on a one-to-one basis as required. If English is not your first language, there is also a course of support specifically designed for your needs.

Additional to face-to-face support, you can also contact your tutors via email, electronic forums and the ncn virtual learning environment (VLE).

The Learning Centres continually update stock to ensure that they are fit for purpose and subscribe to many online journals to assist you with research. All Learning Centres are equipped with up-to-date computers and printing facilities. The ncn student intranet ensures effective communication between staff and students.

Each module will have a module specification. This will identify the learning outcomes, the method of learning and teaching, the assessment structure and weighting and the learning resources that you might use. A module booklet containing the module specification, assessment details, scheme of work and learning resources will support each module.

13 Graduate destinations/employability

There is a wide range of career opportunities within the digital media industry, along with the opportunity to continue your studies to a higher level. ncn offers progression to a 'top-up' degree, the BA (Hons) Digital Media Design, which is a one year full-time course. There are other 'top-up' degrees available at ncn and throughout the country.

A number of design projects set throughout the course are set by industry representatives and take the form of 'live' or 'simulated' work-related briefs or competitions. The final Art, Design, Fashion and Media End of Year Show is an ideal chance to showcase your work

to 'talent scouts' from the industry. In addition to our own End of Year Show, students are also invited to participate in the D&AD 'New Blood' exhibition in London. This is an additional opportunity for you to showcase your work to 'talent scouts' from a broader business community, both nationally and internationally.

14 Course standards and quality

The Course Leader will monitor and review feedback from you, as a current student, on the induction process and delivery of each module. You will also be provided with detailed oral and written feedback on all work that is assessed. You will also be given verbal feedback on skills tasks carried out.

Currency of the course is regularly reviewed through the course team's discussions with the External Examiner, Nottingham Trent University Verifier and via feedback from employers. Work-placement experience, visiting lecturers and industry-related student projects all inform curricular development.

The Student Voice is well represented where learning and teaching and the overall environment is concerned. You are encouraged to take part in student/staff liaison meetings and there is student representation. Digital design students 'own' the annual degree show forming a management team that oversees a range of delivery teams. This is an opportunity for you to work on inter- and multi-disciplinary projects and there are opportunities for first year students to become involved as well as graduating students.

The FdA Digital Design course standards and quality is enhanced by the following:

- External Examiner and Nottingham Trent University Verifier. Both Externals submit an annual report on the standards and quality of the course.
- A Course Standards and Quality Report is completed by the Course Leader at the end of the academic year
- End of module reviews
- Student representative meetings
- The course teaching team have a Course Review Meeting at the end of each semester to review the course and make future plans
- Detailed written feedback provided on all assessed work, and verbal feedback obtained from facilitators of live projects undertaken
- At the end of each academic year the Examination Board is held and all grades and decisions are subject to approval by the Board.

15 Assessment regulations

This course is subject to ncn's HE Assessment Policy (located in the Handbook for Higher Education Students), a copy of which will be made available to you at induction.

16 Additional Information

Collaborative partner(s): Nottingham Trent University

Course referenced to national QAA Benchmark Statements: Subject benchmark statement for Communication, media, film and cultural studies (2016).
Foundation Degree Characteristics Statement (2015)

Course recognised by:

Date implemented: September 2017

Any additional information: