Get ready for BA(Hons) Animation

I hope that you are looking forward to starting at UWE Bristol. As your Programme Leader, I warmly welcome you onto BA(Hons) Animation.

I am delighted to hear that you have secured a place on the BA(Hons) Animation course at UWE and are considering joining us this September. The entire teaching team are looking forward to welcoming you onto our programme, one that continues to go from strength to strength with a track record of producing some outstanding graduates. Graduates like Niamh, Amy, and Anais. who just a few weeks ago won the Southwest Royal Television Society Award for student animation. We secured every nomination in this year's Royal Television Society Southwest Animation category. No doubt you will be looking forward to benefiting from our long-established links with industry built up over many years, that are stronger now than at any time in the past. Our students have enjoyed interacting with many industry professionals in the last year. We have had visitors from studios such as Aardman, Disney, A Productions, Rumpus, Blue Zoo, Scribble Room, and many more too numerous to list. Lots more information is in our Spring newsletter at this link.

I am immensely proud to say that our students have continued to produce work of the very highest standard which is testament to their hard work, determination and professionalism. Of course, achieving such results takes time to achieve though I am confident that you, in your turn will benefit from, and add to the reputation and good standing the Animation course at UWE and its graduates enjoy. You clearly have the potential to achieve the very highest of standards, we have seen this in your portfolios and during your interviews, and with our help and guidance we are confident that you can achieve your ambitions.
With plans to build upon our existing animation facilities in 2026/27. It seems set to be another exciting year.

We have provided some information below that we hope will help you prepare for starting with us.

I look forward to meeting you.

Ian Friend
Programme Leader

Before you start

We are looking forward to welcoming you in the week commencing 14 September for Starting Block and the beginning of your programme.

Starting Block will help you settle into university and to help you get to know your teaching team and course mates. We will help you find your way around, get used to our systems, and practice the skills you need to make a strong start. Look out for further emails and explore the Starting Block website with more details.

Your timetable will be available to you via MYUWE (login required) once you have started the enrolment process. Please visit the 'Understanding your teaching timetable' website to find out when your timetable will be published.

Preparing and arrival

You can find everything you need to know about enrolment, Starting Block and the start of teaching, on our Preparing and Arrival webpage. Take a look at our website to familiarise yourself with our facilities and services such as the library, study skills, academic support, health and wellbeing support and much more.

Enrolment

Once you have satisfied all admissions requirements, we'll send you your login details for our IT systems to enable you to activate your university email account. Once your account has been activated, you'll gain access to the MYUWE platform where you can enrol. Note that your login details for MYUWE are different to those used for the UWE Welcome website. Enrolment for September programmes will only be open from August onwards. You can find guidance and further information on our Enrolment website.

ID card - upload your photo now

We can only print your ID card if you have added your photo to MYUWE. To avoid delays, upload your photo as soon as you receive login details. For help, go to our student card guidance.

Engage with your programme

Start Your Learning

We have an exciting programme of study lined up for you that begins with a short introductory period in which we will introduce you to the programme, the programme team and, perhaps most important of all to one another.

But that's for the future, right now we have put together a few things that we would like you to consider. Some activities, a little suggested reading and research and even some things to take a look at. So, you might want to have a go at these activities that are intended to start preparing for your programme and induction. None of this work will be assessed, they are just things to get you warmed up, so no pressure.

We would like you to start to investigate things around your subject, animation and other topics, themes and subjects that are often associated with animation; design, film, story, photography, drawing, sound and of course research.

- Identify themes and subjects that you might want to think more deeply about: sport, drama, comedy, the environment, science, religion, politics etc.
- Start to consider what YOU think of as important in terms of a practice: story,design, drawing, movement, colour, performance.
- What arguments do you support, what do you believe in?
- Begin to identify the genres of your favourite films and the storytelling formulas used in narrative: quest, rags to riches, tragedy, comedy, rebirth & renewal.
- Start to identify certain tropes; what makes a grandmother, what makes a hero, a villain, a king, a beggar, a teacher etc.

Make a little work.

- Draw from the imagination and draw from observation. This is NOT about making beautiful work but about using drawing to explore your imagination and investigatehow things appear.
- Begin to draw your characters in a dynamic pose and start getting used to placingcharacters that relate to movement, action and animation. that is what you do you are animators…
- Photograph your summer, your friends and family, your dog, your hometown, anything really. Start to look through a lens to frame your shot. Animation is a film-form, start to think like a film maker.

When making work consider:

- When making your work consider only the essential, banish spare work, or things just to make up the numbers.
- Remember you should tap into YOUR imagination and not the imagination of others. Don't simply imitate the work of others.
- When designing characters don't just think about the heroes and villains, think about the supporting characters the role they play and how they relate to the main protagonists.

Read Around Your Subject

A key skill which is required to achieve a high level of success within your chosen programme is the ability to think critically about key issues and practices. To help you to enhance these skills and be ready to engage with your studies, you should start to read and research around your subject before you arrive. Explore the Library web pages to see the wide range of resources available to you once you become a UWE Bristol student.

Here are some books and resources to help you to understand the scopeof your programme. I have listed a number of texts that those making, planning or designing for animationmay find useful for a variety of reasons. I have given a brief outline of the content of the book to assist individuals seeking additional information.

I must emphasize that these recommendations are my personal recommendations and as such may be limited and do not necessarily represent the views of others.

Practical Guides

- Brown, B (2002) *Cinematography, Theory & Practice*, Focal, Oxford
  If you are looking for one book that will assist you with the techniques and principles of cinematography look no further. A very useful book.

- Eisner, W (1985) *Comics and Sequential Art*, Poorhouse Press, Florid
  A first -ate book for those wishing to develop the craft of storyboarding and sequential imaging.

- Halas, J & Whitaker, H, (1981) *Timing for Animation*, Focal Press, Oxford
  The must have book. If there was one book any student animator should own it's this one. Writtenin an accessible style it covers all the principles of animation with easy-to-understand examples and plenty of illustrations. It is a little old fashioned perhaps but it's none the worse for that. Affordable for most students, it is in my opinion the animator's bible.

- Hooks, E (2000) *Acting for Animators: A Complete Guide to Performance Animation*, GreenwoodPress
  There are few books that cover this topic and no doubt animators will find it a useful addition to their collection. It is an easily accessible read though I find that it could have dealt with the topics in a more in-depth manner. This is a minor criticism and I would recommend all animators to take a look at this volume.

- Murphy, M (2008) *Getting Started in Animation*, A & C Black
  An excellent guide to animation for beginners. Covers the basics of all kinds of disciplines in an easy-to-understand manner. A must have for first time animators.

- Scott, J (2002) *How to Write for Animation*, The Overlook Press, New York
  Good. Represents about the only text specifically for animators though is limited with examples taken from series production for children.

- Shaw, S (2003) *Stop Motion: Craft Skills for Model Animation,* Focal Press, Oxford
  An excellent book that covers all the essential basics of 3D Stop Motion animation including materials and armatures. There are few if any that deal with this subject in such a clear and concise manner. This is a vital book for the serious 3D animator.

- Thomas, F & Johnson, O (1985) *The Illusion of Life*, Hyperion
  A brilliant book. Written by two of the masters of animation from the Disney stable. The book is in two distinct parts. The first covers the historic background to the Disney studio and some its greatest animators. While this is interesting and informative it is of little direct use to developing skills. The second, more practical part of the book is pure gold.

- Williams, R (2001) *The Animator's Survival Kit*
  Another brilliant book. Written by master animator and director with years of experience including*Rodger Rabbit*. The book covers in plenty of detail all the principles of animation, explained clearly with loads of illustrations. Written in a very open and accessible style. Computer animators should not be put off by the emphasis on drawn animation, the principles apply to your work too. A must have

book for serious animators.

- Winder, C & Dowlata, Z (2001) *Producing Animation*, Focal Press, Oxford
  First rate book. A must have for independent animators and serious animation students alike. If you only buy one book on production and production management, make it this one.

  Webster, 2 (2005) *Animation: The Mechanics of Motion*, Focal Press, Oxford
  Difficult to say really as it is my own book. There are some useful things in it though not just for 2D Animators particularly on timing for animation.

Theoretical

- Furnis, M. (1998) *Art in Motion Animation Aesthetics,* John Libbey, Sydney
  Another first-rate book that deals with a broad range of issues such as representation, audience and gender.

- Pilling. J ed. (1997) *A Reader in Animation Studies,* John Libbey, London
  Another first-rate book that deals with a broad range of issues such as representation, audience and gender.

- Wells. P (1998) *Understanding Animation*, Routledge, London
  This is a very good text if you wish to get to grips with the contextualization of animation within media production. Entertaining and well written with a light touch (a lamentably rare event with such books unfortunately).

Historic

- Bendazzi, G (1994) *One Hundred Years of Cartoon Animation,* John Libbey, London
  Quite a broad range of animation and animators covered. A good starting point for those interested in history of animation though a serious student will have to search a little further for detailed work on specific areas, studios or animators.

- Maltin, L (1987) *Of Mice and Magic*, De Capo, New York
  First rate though limited in its scope as it only covers cartoon animation in America.

- Jones, C (1990) *Chuck Amuck,* Simon & Schuster, Sydney
  An excellent book. This is a brilliant read that inspires, informs and entertains. A personal account of one of the greatest animators' adventures in animation. It won't make you into a brilliant animator but it will make you wish you were one.

Research - other places to visit

These are just a few starting points. No doubt you will find your own things to look at. Start by looking at the films you like > look at who made them > look at the roles they played > find their individual online presence.

- tvtropes.org
- Alex Hirsch
- cartoonbrew.com
- 'The Mitchells vs. the Machines' Connects with Critics
- The Mitchells vs the Machines imbd Sylvain Marc imbd
- Skwigly online animation magazine animationresources.org

Connect with others

I think you might find it useful if you take a look at the programme, its students and their work.

- instagram.com/Uwe_animation
- facebook.com/UWEBristolSchoolofAnimation
- twitter.com/uwe_animation
- vimeo.com/uweanimation

Be prepared

Access support

Check the information on our Disability web pages so you know what you need to do. If you need any urgent additional mobility or other support to fully access all activities during your studies, contact me as your programme leader.

Get equipped

The University has computers on all our campuses for you to use during your studies. These provide access to our core digital learning tools and any specialist software required for your course. You may have scheduled sessions in computer labs or other specialist facilities, and you will be able to use open-access PCs for self-study.

UWE Bristol licenses many specialist software packages for use on personal laptops for the duration of your course. If you're struggling to meet the financial demands of your course, please contact the Student Money Service team for advice and guidance.

See the UWE website for detailed information on choosing your IT equipment including recommended specifications.

Please note: Many students are uncertain as to the direction their studies will take on the programme, it is therefore important that you don't rush into making a decision on purchasing your own equipment until you have a clear idea of what you need. The following is a guide only when choosing any equipment (indeed you may decide not to purchase your own equipment at all). Please note that the computers in the Animation Labs run on the Windows OS. It is vital that you undertake your own research into your technical requirements to fit in with your budget and personal needs.

The following is an indication of the software and hardware that is used across the programme and the technical spec required to run it.

Software	Ram	Graphics Card/GPU	OS	CPU	Web link
Maya 2022	Min 8., GB 16 Recommended	Click Here	64 bit	64-bit Intel® or AMD® multi-core processor with SSE4.2 instruction set	Click Here
ZBrush 2021	8GB (16GB recommended)	Most cards manufactured 2008 or newer. Must support OpenGL 3.3 or higher. NB: 100 GB of free hard drive space for ZBrush and its scratch disk. (SSD drive highly recommended.)	64-bit editions of Windows Vista or newer	Intel i5/i7/Xeon technology or AMD equivalent	Click Here
Substance Painter	8GB min	8GB VRAM NVIDIA GeForce GTX 900 and above NVIDIA Quadro M2000 and above AMD Radeon HD 7700, R7 260, R9 290 and above AMD Radeon Pro WX-2000 / Pro Duo and above AMD FirePro W5000 and above *Unsupported GPU configurations = Nvidia Iray renderer requires CUDA drivers to use the GPU. eGPUs are not currently supported and may have stability issues. Integrated GPUs are not supported. While the application may be able to run on GPUs such as Intel HD 6000 or IRis Pro 6200 and above many issues can arise.	64 bit		Click Here
Adobe After Effects	16GB (32 recommended)		64 bit	Multicore Intel processor with 64-bit support	Click Here
Adobe Premiere	16GB (32 recommended)	4 GB of GPU VRAM Recommended graphics cards	Microsoft Windows 10 (64-bit) version 1809 or later	Intel® 7thGen or newer CPU – or AMD equivalent	Sound card- ASIO compatible or Microsoft Windows Driver Model – Click Here
Toon Boom Harmony	Min 8 GB	NVIDIA Geforce GTX 1070	64 bit	Intel Core i7 , 3.4 GHz Intel Core i5, 3 GHz Intel Core 2 Duo	
Toon Boom Story Board Pro	Min 4 GB	Recommended: NVIDIA GeForce GTX 960	64 bit	Recommended: Intel® Core™ i5/i7 or Intel® Xeon® / 3.3 GHz	
TV paint	Min 2 GB		32 and 63 bit	Any dual core processor	
Adobe Animate	2 GB of RAM (8 GB recommended)	OpenGL version 3.3 or higher (DirectX 12 with feature level 12_0 recommended)	Windows 10 version, 1803, 1809 and later.	Intel Pentium 4 or Intel Centrino, Intel Xeon, or Intel Core Duo (or compatible) processor (2GHz or faster processor)	Click Here
Stop Motion Pro	8 GB			i7 or i5 CPU	
Creative Cloud – all apps					Click Here
Dragonframe	Min 4 GB	OpenGL version 2.1 or higher	64 bit	Intel/AMD CPU with 2+ Cores	Click here

Pen displays and drawing tablets

Pen displays:

- Wacom Cintiq HD13 – a number of these are available through the loans desk.
- Wacom Cintiq 22 or 16 inch – we have 22inch Cintiqs on campus in the Animation labs.
- HUION pen displays

Graphics tablets:

- Wacom Intuos graphics tablets
- HUION drawing tablets

International students

The Global Student Support Team offer information and advice to ensure you receive all the support you need to get the best from your time at UWE Bristol. They are here to help you to settle in when you first arrive at UWE Bristol and organise social events to help you to adapt to your new environment.

Who to contact if you have questions?

For any questions about the course, please contact the Programme leader:

Ian Friend via email at Ian.Friend@uwe.ac.uk

Please note: this information has been provided on the assumption that you will meet the conditions of your offer and be eligible to take up your place.

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