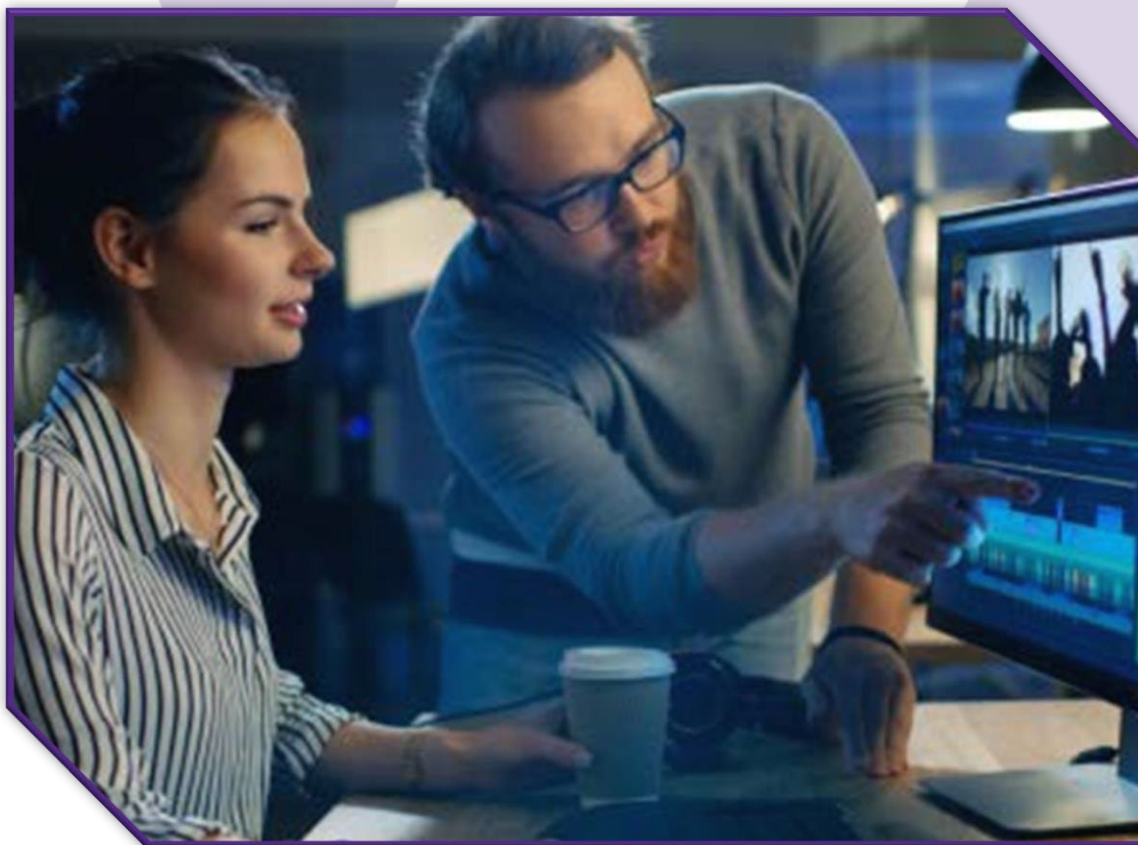


AIM Qualifications Level 3 Diploma in Games, Animation and VFX Skills Specification

603/3066/1

VERSION 3 OCTOBER 2022



Document version history

Version number	Date	Description
2	November 2019	▪ Statement added regarding grading algorithms and grade thresholds following communications from Ofqual ▪ Added UCAs points table to 'about this qualification' section ▪ Updated 'Approval to offer qualifications' section and added table
3	October 2022	▪ GLH for Core Principles of Game Design updated from 30 to 36

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About us

Qualification specification for Level 3 Diploma in Games, Animation and VFX Skills

AIM Qualifications and Assessment Group is a leading Awarding Organisation supplying hundreds of centres with high-quality regulated vocational and technical qualifications. We also offer non-accredited provision and apprenticeship end-point assessments.

AIM qualifications cover a range of academic levels from Entry Level to Level 6 across a wide range of subject areas. All our UK Level 3 qualifications carry UCAS tariff points which can count towards university entry requirements.

About this qualification specification

This specification is intended for tutors, internal quality assurers, centre managers and other staff within AIM recognised centres and/or prospective centres. It provides information about the structure and delivery of the qualification. The specification should be read in conjunction with the AIM Centre Handbook and other policy documents available on the website and in the MIA portal.

Offering this qualification

In order to offer this qualification, you must be an AIM recognised centre and be approved to deliver this qualification. If your centre is not yet recognised, please contact our business development team to discuss becoming an AIM recognised centre. They can advise you on the best qualifications for your organisation.

You can arrange a meeting by emailing businessdevelopment@aimgroup.org.uk or calling [0333 034 8833](tel:0333 034 8833). More information can be found on: www.aim-group.org.uk/newcentre



Section 1 – Qualification overview

About this qualification

With their inception drawn from the Government UKCES Ownership of Skills initiative, this AIM Technical qualification has been designed in partnership with employers to cover all the knowledge and skills identified by employers as essential to teams working in any one of the games, animation and VFX industries. The employer representative group who have designed and continue to support the qualifications through the provision of case study materials, workshops and direct contact with individual centres and learner cohorts include:

- Framestore
- Double Negative
- Blue Zoo
- Ubisoft
- Sony
- Microsoft
- The Imaginarium
- Creative Assembly
- Playground Games
- Centroid

Employers consider that full depth and breadth of knowledge and skills that will most effectively prepare new entrants will be most successfully achieved through the 2 year AIM Qualifications Level 3 Extended Diploma in Games, Animation and VFX Skills. However, in an acknowledgement that not all learners will be in a position to follow a 2 year course, they have identified a list of components that represent fundamental skills and knowledge that can be effectively used as a launch point and which, together, form a coherent whole sufficient for a Diploma sized qualification.

Thus art, animation, visual effects, games design, principles of 3D design, maths and product programming all are mandatory components for the Diploma qualification as well as in the Extended Diploma. The Extended Diploma continues learning to encompass the opportunity for learners to develop more sophisticated technical skills, gives them an insight into industry working practice, experience of project and production management including the common industry practice of agile and scrum techniques as well as the opportunity to research an emerging technology or commercial trend that has current and/or potential future implications for one or more of the industries.

The inclusion of research, essay writing and exams as assessment tools as well as the requirement to produce an asset portfolio ensures that a learner progressing to degree level courses will be well served with the acquisition of study skills that will support them to be able to cope with the independent learning that will be required of them at any Higher Education Institute (HEI).

A number of HEIs offering degree courses in games, animation and VFX have also been closely involved in the design of these qualifications and continue to support them through special application processes.

A clear understanding of how the games, animation and VFX industries work in practice and experience of working to a specific industry brief in a way that replicates industry methods of project management will

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ensure that any learner choosing to progress their learning and career path through a higher level apprenticeship or a degree apprenticeship will be able to start work immediately without necessarily requiring any industry understanding preparation programme. Similarly, the necessary understanding and abilities in the basic concepts of art, maths and programming will be of great support to learners, apprentices and/or new employees whatever their progression route. Regular and relatively frequent review dates for these qualifications ensure that they remain industry current. Industry employers are key stakeholder in the review process.

This qualification carries UCAS points

UCAS points (also known as the UCAS Tariff) are a way of measuring the relative value of all post-16 qualifications in the UK. The UCAS Tariff assigns a numerical score to the possible grades that can be achieved in each type of qualification. The higher the grade achieved by the student, the higher the number of points. Many UK universities and courses will make offers based on the total number of points earned.

Size band: 4+4+4 = 12

Grade bands: 6-14

Grade	Tariff Points
Distinction	84
High merit	72
Merit	60
High pass	48
Pass	36

Qualification details

AIM Qualifications Level 3 Diploma in Games, Animation and VFX Skills	
Qualification	Technical
Assessment	Please see page 14 for further details
Grading	Fail, pass, high pass, merit, high merit, distinction
Geographical coverage	England
Operational start date	01/08/2018
Review date	31/07/2023
Sector	9.3 Media and Communication
Qualification number	603/3066/1
Guided Learning Hours (GLH)	540
Total Qualification Time (TQT)	863
Minimum learner age	16+
Rules of combination	Learners must achieve the mandatory components to achieve this qualification.

Regulated Qualification Framework (RQF)

The Regulated Qualifications Framework (RQF) provides a single, simple system for cataloguing all qualifications regulated by Ofqual. Qualifications are indexed by their level and size. Levels indicate the difficulty and complexity of the knowledge and skills associated with any qualification. There are eight levels supported by three “entry levels”. Size refers to the estimated total amount of time it could typically take to study and be assessed for a qualification. Size is expressed in term of Total Qualification Time (TQT). The part of the TQT spent being taught or supervised is known as Guided Learning Hours (GLH).

Total Qualification Time (TQT) and Guided Learning Hours (GLH)

Total Qualification Time (TQT) is the number of notional hours it takes a typical learner to achieve the full qualification and is **made up of two elements**:

- the minimum number of Qualification Guided Learning Hours (GLH) - the number of Tutor led contact hours
- the number of hours spent on preparation, studying and the assessment that is non-guided

For example, the number of tutor-led contact hours (GLH) for a qualification is 30 and the number of hours spent by the learner (non-GLH) on preparation, studying and the assessment is 6 hours. Therefore, the Total Qualification Time (TQT) for the qualification is 36 hours.

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Progression opportunities

Learners may progress into higher education to any games, animation or VFX degree, a higher level apprenticeship or into employment.

Entry requirements

It is recommended that learners have a minimum of Level 2 literacy and numeracy skills or Grade 4/C GCSE English and Maths, or equivalent.

Resource requirements

Please see each component for specific resource requirements.

Requirements to deliver this Qualification

As an Awarding Organisation, we require that:

Tutors have relevant teaching experience and/or a qualification and experience and/or a qualification in the relevant subject area. Suitable teaching qualifications include:

- Level 3 or 4 Preparing to Teach in the Lifelong Learning Sector (PTLLS) or above
- Level 3 Education and Training or above
- Diploma or Certificate in Education
- Bachelors or Masters Degree in Education

Internal Verifiers (IV) should have subject knowledge and be knowledgeable and have experience of internally verification.

The holistic assessment methodology of this qualification demands that across the teaching and assessing team, there is a need to combine both technical and creative expertise as well as the ability to teach maths and programming in an industry context. Staff should hold appropriate qualifications to teach their subject and demonstrate professional expertise working in a team that has created animation, interactive, game or visual effect products. Staff should also have sufficient knowledge of changes in the technology and business trends affecting these industries to develop their own skill and teaching base accordingly.

Qualification dates

The qualification review date is the date by which we will have carried out a review of the qualification. We work with sector representatives to make any changes necessary to meet sector needs and to reflect recent developments. In most cases, we'll extend the qualification and set a new review date. If we make a decision to withdraw a qualification, we'll set an operational end date.

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We will post information relating to changes or extensions to qualifications on our website and centres approved to offer the qualification will be kept updated. The certification end date will be three years from the operational end date.



Section 2 – Qualification structure

Qualification structure and components

This section details the rules of combinations for the qualifications. Select the component titles to view the component details.

Rules of combination for:		Level 3 Diploma in Games, Animation and VFX Skills		
Learners must achieve the mandatory components to achieve this qualification.				
Component code	Component title	Level	GLH	
Mandatory				
Y/616/9356	3D Tools Creative and Technical 3D Modelling	Three	126	
H/616/9358	Art Fundamentals for the Games, Animation and VFX Industries	Three	90	
K/616/9359	Core Principles of Games Design	Three	36	
D/616/9360	Fundamental Animation Skills for the Games, Animation and VFX Industries	Three	72	
H/616/9361	Fundamental Product Programming Skills	Three	72	
K/616/9362	Maths and Logic Fundamentals for the Games, Animation and VFX Industries	Three	72	
M/616/9363	VFX Fundamentals for the Games, Animation and VFX Industries	Three	72	

Level descriptors

Components are assigned a level based in the current requirements for the RQF as issued by OFQUAL.

Level	Knowledge descriptor	Skills descriptor
Level 3	Has factual, procedural and theoretical knowledge and understanding of a subject or field of work to complete tasks that while well-defined, may be complex and non-routine. Can interpret and evaluate relevant information and ideas. Is aware of the nature of the area of study or work. Is aware of different perspectives or approaches within the area of study or work.	Identify, select and use appropriate cognitive and practical skills, methods and procedures to address problems that while well-defined, may be complex and non-routine. Use appropriate investigation to inform actions. Review how effective methods and actions have been.



Section 3 – Assessment

Industry involvement in delivery

It is important that centres develop an approach to teaching and learning that supports the technical and applied focus of this qualification. It is a mandatory requirement for centres to involve industry in the delivery of this qualification. AIM will ensure employer involvement in the assessment of the qualification by providing synoptic project assessment tasks devised and set by industry practitioners. However, it is good practice for centres to involve employers and/or industry practitioners in the assessment of the qualification.

This enriches the learning experience, raises the credibility of the qualification in the eyes of employers, parents and learners and further enhances the collaboration between education and industry.

Suitable involvement could include:

- providing structured work experience or work placements that develop skills and knowledge relevant to the qualification
- setting project(s), exercise(s) and/or assessment tasks with input from industry practitioner(s)
- delivery or co-delivery of components by an industry practitioner(s) - this could take the form of master classes or guest lectures
- industry practitioners operating as 'expert witnesses' that contribute to the assessment of a student's work or practice

Assurance of industry involvement

We will operate the following procedures to confirm that centres have secured employer involvement for every learner:

- Qualification approval: We will review the arrangements centres have in place to meet this requirement at the qualification approval stage, using the expression of interest form which can be found on our website. Centres that cannot meet this requirement will not be given qualification approval.
- On programme: Our external verifiers will ask for evidence of employer involvement as part of their external verification visits.

Should the on-programme monitoring identify that the mandatory requirement for employer involvement for every learner is not being met, we will:

- apply a level 2 sanction (temporary suspension of certification for specific qualifications/components/learners or areas of provision) on any centre that fails to meet this mandatory requirement
- the centre will not be able to claim certificates for the affected qualifications
- we will inform the centre that we have applied a sanction and what they must do to rectify the

- situation an action plan will need to be implemented by the centre and will be monitored by the centre's allocated external quality assurance manager (EQAM)
- offer to help support the centre by helping facilitate through our own links with industry partners

Details of our sanctions can be found in our Sanctions policy on our website.

Reasonable adjustment and special considerations

Reasonable adjustments and Special Considerations are available for all assessments, irrespective of whether they are internally or externally set. Where a learner or group of learners may not be able to access the assessment without Reasonable Adjustments, centres should ensure that they apply in good time for relevant reasonable adjustments to be made, using the [AIM Qualifications Reasonable Adjustments and Special Considerations Policy](#) which gives clear guidance on the reasonable adjustments and arrangements that can be made to take account of disability or learning difficulty without compromising the achievement of the assessment criteria.

Summary of assessment methods

AIM has worked collaboratively with employers and key industry stakeholders to devise an appropriate and valid assessment strategy, as follows:

- this qualification consists of mandatory components, identified by industry, all of which must be achieved in order to achieve the qualification. There are no optional components.
- assessment is synoptic – assessments cover several components allowing learners to bring together and apply their developing skills and knowledge
- each assessment must be passed in order to achieve the qualification
- overall grades for the qualification are calculated once each assessment has been passed (as a minimum).

Learners must achieve the assessments detailed in the table below.

Assessment method	Overview
Core principles exam	▪ Externally set and externally marked examination. ▪ Assesses knowledge and understanding of the core principles and skills of games, animation and visual effect design.
Asset development portfolio	▪ The asset development portfolio should contain marked examples of learner work referenced to the specified standards across a range of components internally set, internally marked and subject to external verification ▪ Assesses core technical skills.

Synoptic assessment

This qualification follows the DfE definition for synoptic assessment:

“A form of assessment which requires a candidate to demonstrate that s/he can identify and use effectively in an integrated way an appropriate selection of skills, techniques, concepts, theories, and knowledge from across the whole vocational area, which are relevant to a key task.”

This qualification is designed in a holistic manner and assessment is synoptic rather than i.e. it is referenced to components across the qualification. It supports a coherent learning and assessment programme by:

- requiring learners to draw on knowledge and skills from a range of components to create assets
- embedding and assessing transferable skills alongside specific vocational content, such as project management, teamwork, evaluation and research
- demonstrating the inter-relationship of components
- including overarching examinations which assess the core principles
- ensuring centres integrate meaningful employer involvement to enrich the delivery experience
- providing specific guidance to teachers and tutors on the holistic delivery and assessment of components where there is a natural interdependence

Synoptic assessment mapping

Component Title	Core principles exam	Asset development portfolio	Written assignment: art theory in context
3D Tools Creative and Technical 3D Modelling		✓	
Art Fundamentals for the Games, Animation and VFX Industries		✓	✓
Core Principles of Games Design	✓	✓	
Fundamental Animation Skills for the Games, Animation and VFX Industries		✓	
Fundamental Product Programming Skills	✓		
Maths and Logic Fundamentals for the Games, Animation and VFX Industries	✓		
VFX Fundamentals for the Games, Animation and VFX Industries		✓	

**It may not be appropriate to assess all components with the graded synoptic project. Learners are required to identify the skills and knowledge they have used to complete the Synoptic Project*

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Contribution of assessment to the overall qualification grade

All assessments contribute to the overall qualification grade, as set out in the table below:

Assessment task	Grading model	% of qualification grade
Core principles exam	The score (marks) achieved will be converted into points which contribute to the overall qualification grade.	40%
Portfolio	fail/pass/merit/distinction	40%
Written assignment: art theory in context	fail/pass/merit/distinction	20%

External assessment

Core principles exam

Type of external assessment	Written exam. The examination will consist of questions that cover a broad range of knowledge and understanding from across the components covered. There will be a mix of short response questions that test essential knowledge and longer questions that test learner’s awareness of application of knowledge.		
Availability (booking)	Two sessions: April (main), June (resit) - <i>Exact exam dates TBC</i> This exam takes place in the first year of study		
Controls	Tasks are devised by AIM Examination must take place under controlled examination conditions Learner work is marked by AIM		
Duration	3 hours		
Number of marks	100		
Grading	The grade awarded will correspond to a points value that will contribute to the overall qualification grade:		
		0-39	0
		40-49	72
		50-59	76
		60-69	80
		70-79	84
	80-100	88	
Components covered	<i>Published grading algorithms/grade thresholds may be subject to change.</i>		
	▪ Core Principles of Game Design ▪ Fundamental Product Programming Skills ▪ Maths and Logic Fundamentals for the Games, Animation and VFX Industries		
Contribution to overall grade	40%		

External assessment regulations

Retaking external examinations

Repeat submissions are not allowed. Learners who fail to achieve the required pass mark or are deemed to have underperformed, are permitted ONE retake opportunity. The retake must be at a different sitting and it is expected that further teaching/tuition would have taken place.

Retake examinations will be a new task.

Reasonable adjustments

Reasonable adjustments are adjustments made to an assessment for a qualification so as to enable a learner to demonstrate their knowledge, skills and understanding. The nature of any reasonable adjustments depends on the particular requirements as well as on the qualification and assessment methods. Reasonable adjustments are generally not appropriate where the learner's particular difficulty directly affects performance in the actual attributes to be assessed.

For internally assessed learner work

The internal verifier may give permission for reasonable adjustments for a learner without having to apply to AIM for approval, provided that such arrangements do not confer an unfair advantage. The internal verifier must approve and record the details of all reasonable adjustments made at the discretion of the centre and must make this available for external verification.

For externally assessed examinations/report

If reasonable adjustments are required for learners taking examinations, the centre must gain approval from AIM prior to the date of the examination:

1. The tutor should complete and submit a Request for Reasonable Adjustments Form for each learner with supporting evidence to AIM at least 14 days before the planned examination date
2. AIM will confirm receipt of the form within two working days
3. AIM will consider the application and give a decision within 10 working days of receipt. AIM will inform the centre if we will be unable to reach a decision in this timescale.

Types of evidence acceptable

- Psychologist's report – must be current/valid within two years of the date of the examinations
- Specialist teachers assessment report – must be current/valid within two years of the date of the examinations

- Medical letter – must be specific AND recommend, in detail, the support being requested. For a long term physical/medical condition which is not going to change i.e. hearing/visual impairment – a letter from a doctor/optician or hospital report is acceptable in most cases. A condition which is not permanent, but will not go away, will require a new letter confirming the diagnosis each academic year.

Further details are provided in our reasonable adjustments and Special Considerations handbook available on the AIM website.

Special considerations

Special consideration is consideration to be given to a learner who has temporarily experienced:

- an illness or injury
- an event outside of their control which has had or is reasonably likely to have had an effect on their ability to take an assessment or on their level of attainment in an assessment

Special consideration is not appropriate for a minor illness or a minor disturbance.

It may not be possible to apply special consideration where an assessment requires the learner to demonstrate practical competence. In some circumstances it may be more appropriate to offer the learner an opportunity to take the assessment at a later date rather than apply special considerations.

In the case of examinations:

1. The head of centre should complete and submit a request for special consideration. Form for each learner requesting special consideration with supporting evidence, which may include medical/psychological evidence or a statement from the invigilator/verifier to AIM no later than 24 hours after the examination date
2. AIM will confirm receipt of the form within two working days
3. AIM will consider your application and give a decision within 10 working days of receipt. AIM will inform the centre if we are unable to reach a decision in this timescale.

Further details are provided in our reasonable adjustments and special considerations document available on our website.

Invigilation of examinations

Centres are responsible for appointing invigilators according to the [invigilation guidance for AIM external assessments handbook](#). Centres must ensure that there are no conflicts of interest between the Invigilator and learners by checking in advance of the examination (e.g. a relative of a learner, a teacher who has prepared learners for the examination being taken or there is a personal interest in the outcome of the assessment).

There must be at least one invigilator present per thirty learners. Where there are less than thirty learners and a sole invigilator, assistance must be available for the invigilator without them having to leave the room or disturb the learners.

All learners in the room must be able to be seen by an invigilator at all times.

In accordance with JCQ guidance, centres in the UK are allowed to start examinations by up to 30 minutes earlier than, or later than, the publishing starting time for the session, without the need to complete any paperwork.

Prior permission from an awarding body is not required. Where this policy is followed, to avoid any possible breach of security, late arriving candidates or early departing candidates must be supervised as if the specified starting time had been in place.

Invigilators must follow the instructions from the [invigilation guidance handbook](#) and have a copy of these instructions to hand at all times during the examination.

Invigilators must confirm and be satisfied with the identity of all learners sitting the examination. By signing the assessment cover sheet, the invigilator/head of centre takes responsibility for confirmation of learner attendance at the examination and that there are no conflicts of interest between themselves and learners. Examination scripts and assessment cover sheets must be packed by the invigilator and sealed securely.

Should a conflict of interest be identified at the start of or during the invigilation of an examination, the procedures below must be followed:

Where there is a known potential conflict of interest, the invigilator/assessor must complete and submit a conflict of interest declaration form (available on the AIM website here) declaring the potential conflicts of interest prior to invigilating an examination.

AIM will consider all declarations and inform the examination centre of one of the following possible outcomes:

1. The invigilator is accepted to manage the examination/assessor approved to assess
2. Further information is required to demonstrate suitability
3. Further appropriate steps agreed to have the invigilation or assessment subject to scrutiny by another person
4. The invigilator/assessor has a conflict of interest and the application has been rejected.

If an applicant is dissatisfied with the decision, they can appeal to AIM within two weeks of receiving the outcome.

Should a conflict of interest between staff and learner be identified at the start of or during the examination/assessment, you must replace the invigilator/assessor with another suitable member of staff:

- a) If this is not possible, move the learner to another assessment/examination room
- b) If this is not possible, add an additional member of staff to invigilate/assess those learners.

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Internal assessment

If this is not possible and there are no other opportunities for the learner to be examined/assessed, the examination/assessment may take place. Immediately following the examination/assessment, you must complete and submit by email (to the centre's AIM customer support officer) the conflict of interest: change in circumstance form explaining this. Any examinations that have taken place where a conflict of interest: change in circumstance form has been submitted will be moderated to ensure that no unfair advantage has been given to those learners.

This section should be read in parallel with this qualification's assignment briefs and mark schemes, which contain in depth information on the planning, delivery and assessment of the internal assessments (these will be issued via email).

Internally set assessments are to be based on the assignment briefs provided by AIM. Where specified on the brief these may be contextualised by the centre, for example centres may choose to incorporate industry set scenarios. Centres must take a best practice approach, where appropriate, to the assessment such that learners are assessed in a real or realistic working environment.

AIM assignment briefs include marking templates and grading criteria for internal assessors to use to support consistent marking, feedback and evidence for quality assurance.

All internal assessment decisions made by a centre will be externally quality assured by AIM. Centres are encouraged to attend regular standardisation meetings at AIM.

Asset development portfolio

Overview

This assignment consists of internally set tasks (based on our brief), is internally marked, graded and quality assured by centres, and subject to external verification by AIM.

Centres must use the assignment brief and mark sheet set by AIM (this will be sent via email and is also available for centres on our secure area) and may contextualise and set tasks to suit their learners. Where appropriate centres may work with employers to specify the practical tasks to be undertaken and evidenced in the portfolio.

The criteria for achieving a pass, merit or distinction are set out in the mark sheet.

Assessors should provide learners with constructive and useful feedback on the finished submission and this must be recorded on the mark sheet.

Guidance

The portfolio of work is the means by which learners show the development of their technical skills and provide evidence of how they have met the technical standards identified in the fundamental and core principles components. These components have been identified by employers across the games, animation

and VFX industries as containing standards which represent the essential and fundamental skills required by new entrants to their industries without which it would be difficult for the employee to progress their careers. These components enable learners to create a bank of assets that they can then use to support their achievement of the standards in later components of this qualification which are assessed by synoptic project.

The portfolio content should be identified by a contents list that clearly references the location of evidence for each assessed task that relates to each Standard. It is important to note

that this portfolio will contain evidence of how learners have met Standards from across a number of components.

The portfolio includes a reflective blog which is an important part of the learner's learning process for this qualification as both a document recording what has been learned and an introduction to reflective practice. The reflective blog should be monitored by tutors throughout the delivery of the qualification and learners should be encouraged to understand how self reflection can support their development towards high level achievement in the assessments.

Writing word-limited reflective blog entries after every course session is good practice and will prepare learners for further study and for work where it is common practice. In addition, personal reflection supports the development of critical thinking which have been identified by employers across the games, animation and VFX industries as essential but commonly lacking in new entrants to their industries.

The portfolio can also act as a showcase for learner work and it is expected, therefore, that tutor/assessors will support learners to produce the best evidence that they can before submitting their evidence to their portfolio.

Written assignment

Overview

This assignment consists of internally set tasks (based on our brief), is internally marked, graded and quality assured by centres, and subject to external verification by AIM.

Centres must use the assignment brief and mark scheme set by AIM (these will be issued via email and are available for centres on our secure area) and may contextualise it and set tasks to suit their learners.

The criteria for achieving a pass, merit or distinction are set out in the mark sheet.

Assessors should provide learners with constructive and useful feedback on the finished submission and this must be recorded on the mark sheet.

Guidance

The written assignment tests the learner's understanding of fundamental artistic concepts and the way in which they have and continue to influence design contextualisation across the games, animation and VFX

industries. This assignment will prepare learners for the required research project. The written assignments must be written in a formal style appropriate to the brief with:

- an introduction
- the main body of text which includes discussion, analysis, illustration where indicated and some
- evaluation of the information used as references
- a conclusion
- a list of references (the Harvard referencing system is suggested)

A suggested written assignment approach to follow is to:

- prepare
- research
- plan the content and argument
- find suitable quotations to support the argument
- write the main body
- write the conclusion and introduction
- complete the reference list

Internal assessment regulations

Deadlines

Deadlines for internally marked tasks may be set by the centre and must be clearly communicated to learners on the assessment tasks.

Late submissions (for internally set tasks only)

A late submission is capped at a pass unless an extension was agreed as outlined below. All first submissions must be made before the end of the course.

Extensions (for internally set tasks only)

Tutors may agree an extension period of up to two weeks by negotiation and where genuine reasons can be evidenced. In exceptional circumstances, the learner may be granted longer than two weeks to submit, however that would need to be supported by the personal tutor/course leader. The personal tutor will be notified of extensions and will monitor these in order to ensure that the learner is coping with the demands of their qualification.

Resubmission (for internally set tasks only)

A first submission that fails to meet the pass criteria may be returned to the learner (with feedback) for resubmission. Feedback must relate to the pass criteria and Standards. Resubmission should be within a

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few days (no longer than a week) and be proportionate to the degree of non-achievement. A timely resubmission that meets all the pass criteria is considered for further grading.

Referral (for internally set tasks only)

A learner whose resubmission (submission 2) fails to meet the pass criteria may request a referral i.e. the opportunity to make a second resubmission (submission 3). The request is made of the assessor and internal verifier (IV) who collate evidence and subsequently convey the request to the external verifier (EV). Even if the assessor and IV believe the situation doesn't warrant a referral, it should still be referred to the EV for confirmation or challenge. The EV informs the IV and the assessor of the decision. If approved, conditions of referral are set by the EV and conveyed to the centre.

Decisions about referrals made by the EV must include:

- whether or not a second resubmission opportunity should be offered
- the nature and extent of the requirements for second resubmission
- compliance with the relevant requirements for first resubmissions

Referrals undergo assessment by the assessor, internal verification and external verification. If the pass criteria are met, achievement is capped at a pass. If the pass criteria are not met, the result is a fail.

Marking and grading internally assessed learner work

Learners must achieve the requisite number of components as specified in the rules of combination. Learners must achieve a pass grade or higher in all external and internal assessments. Each internal assessment task is graded pass, merit or distinction using the provided criteria. Learners are also issued points based on their performance in the external examinations.

Assessors must judge learner performance against specified assessment criteria and award a grade of fail, pass, merit or distinction:

- to achieve a pass, learners must have satisfied all pass assessment criteria
- to achieve a merit, learners must have satisfied all pass and merit assessment criteria
- to achieve a distinction, learners must have satisfied all pass, merit and distinction assessment criteria

Learners who do not satisfy all pass criteria are given a 'fail' grade.

Summative feedback should be provided to learners with feed-forward guidance for how to complete future submissions. The completed mark sheets must be presented alongside the learner marked work for internal and external verification. If opportunities for recognition of prior learning (RPL) have been identified, then the evidence to support the claim for RPL must be submitted along with a completed RPL and credit transfer form to the external verifier. This is available on the AIM website.

Each assessment task carries a weighting towards the qualification grade and some tasks are worth more than others. For each assessment task, a number of points are allocated to pass, merit and distinction grades, for example 27, 30 and 33. Once all tasks are achieved, these points must be totalled to arrive at

the overall qualification grade, according to the table below. A template for recording these grades is provided at the back of this pack.

Calculating points for internal assessments

The grade awarded for internal assessments must each be cross referenced to the table below to determine the points awarded:

Assessment task	% of qualification grade	Points per grade			Points awarded
		Pass	Merit	Distinction	
Asset development portfolio	40%	72	80	88	
Written assignment: art theory in context	20%	36	40	44	
Total points:					

Calculating points for external assessments

Marks for each external assessment will correspond to a points value that will contribute to the overall qualification grade:

Assessment task	% of qualification grade	Grade awarded (pass, merit, distinction)	Points per grade			Points awarded																					
			Pass	Merit	Distinction																						
Core principles exam	40% (external assessment)	Awarded by AIM	For each exam session, grade boundaries will be determined by AIM according to the total marks available. The grade awarded will correspond to a points value that will contribute to the overall qualification grade: <table><tr><th></th><th>Mark range</th><th>Points</th></tr><tr><td>Fail</td><td>0 - 39</td><td>0</td></tr><tr><td>Pass</td><td>40 - 49</td><td>72</td></tr><tr><td>High pass</td><td>50 - 59</td><td>76</td></tr><tr><td>Merit</td><td>60 - 69</td><td>80</td></tr><tr><td>High merit</td><td>70 - 79</td><td>84</td></tr><tr><td>Distinction</td><td>80 - 100</td><td>88</td></tr></table>				Mark range	Points	Fail	0 - 39	0	Pass	40 - 49	72	High pass	50 - 59	76	Merit	60 - 69	80	High merit	70 - 79	84	Distinction	80 - 100	88	Issued by AIM
	Mark range	Points																									
Fail	0 - 39	0																									
Pass	40 - 49	72																									
High pass	50 - 59	76																									
Merit	60 - 69	80																									
High merit	70 - 79	84																									
Distinction	80 - 100	88																									

Calculating the overall qualification grade

The overall grade for the qualification is calculated by adding together the points achieved from internal and external assessments. The conversion table below must be used to determine the learner's overall qualification grade.

Points range	Overall qualification grade
180 - 187	Pass
188 - 195	High pass
196 - 203	Merit
204 - 211	High merit
212 - 220	Distinction

Recognition of prior learning

Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) is a process of assessing and validating learning or achievement that has not been certificated or accredited previously towards the qualification being studied. Credit transfer allows for previously accredited achievement from within the regulated qualification framework to count towards another qualification, where it is allowed as an equivalency within the new qualification, or where the learner has already achieved component(s) belonging to that qualification. A maximum of 70% of a qualification can normally be achieved through equivalency (credit transfer). At least 30% should be gained through new learning.

The tutor or assessor should carry out an effective interview and initial assessment of learners to establish their previous qualifications and experience. Funding may be affected if a learner achieves more than 50% of the assessment through RPL.

Opportunities for recognition of prior learning can only be considered against internally assessed elements of this qualification.

Please refer to the AIM website for more information.

Learners who have completed the AIM Qualifications Level 3 Diploma in Games, Animation and VFX Skills will be able to top up their qualification to the AIM Level 3 Extended Diploma in Games, Animation and VFX Skills.



Section 4 – Operational guidance

Offering this qualification

Centres wishing to offer this qualification must be an AIM recognised centre.

New centres can apply to become a centre using the centre recognition application process on our website: www.aim-group.org.uk.

We can advise centres of the best and most efficient methods for offering this qualification.

All procedures for the use of this qualification, including approval, registration of learners, verification and certification will be completed through AIM and all centres will have an allocated customer experience advisor to support them.

Approval to offer qualifications

Centres wishing to offer this qualification must complete and submit a qualification approval request. [This can be found on the AIM website when choosing a qualification](#). Some qualifications require centres to have specific resources in place and/or their assessors/internal verifiers should hold certain qualifications. Where this is the case, centres must provide evidence of resources/staff qualifications when completing the Qualification Approval request.

Registration and certification

Once your centre has approval to offer a qualification, you will be able to register learners to these qualifications via our Quartzweb portal, at this point you can also select their chosen components. Please ensure that learners are registered against the correct qualification and are aware of the rules of combination required to achieve the qualification.

For all registration and certification processes, please refer to the Quartzweb guidance document which can be downloaded from our website's [centre handbooks and forms page](#). Details of assessment, internal verification and external verification can be found in the [AIM Qualifications: Assessment Handbook](#).

Learners achieving a qualification will be issued with a qualification certificate detailing the achieved qualification and components. Learners who have not achieved a qualification will, on request, be issued with a component certificate detailing the components achieved.

External verification of internal assessment

Once learner evidence has been completed, assessed and internally verified according to the centre's internal verification plan, the work should be presented for external verification. Details of assessment and internal verification of internal assessment can be found in the invigilation guidance for AIM external assessments form found on the AIM website.

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The external verifier (EV) will:

- expect to be able to look at all completed and assessed learner evidence that is being claimed for. All samples are selected by the EV. The completed ERAC(s) must also be made available for the EV to review. If the EV is satisfied with the standards of assessment and verification, they will sign the ERAC(s) and learners will be certificated
- review records of assessment, internal verification documentation, feedback to learners and any records of reasonable adjustments applied
- judge the quality of synoptic delivery and assessment in line with the assignment brief
- review and monitor the quality of meaningful employer involvement in the delivery and assessment of the qualification. The external verifier will ask for evidence of how the centre has met this requirement for every learner:
 - how the employer involvement relates to the qualification, and has been integrated into its delivery plan
 - how the employer involvement adds value to the qualification
 - how the centre has monitored delivery to ensure that it is not possible for a learner to reach the end of their course without the employer involvement requirement having been met
 - how the centre ensures that employer involvement activities are of a suitably high quality



Section 5 – Appendices and links

Appendices and links

Select an appendix or link from the list below to view the document.

Useful links

Link 1 - [AIM Centre handbooks and forms](#)

Link 2 - [AIM Qualifications: Assessment Handbook](#)

Link 3 - [Fees and Charges](#)

Link 4 - [Qualification Search](#)

Useful appendices

Appendix 1 – Assessment mapping (below)

Appendix 2 – Learner purpose statement (below)

Command verbs

Level 3	
Analyse	Learners present the outcome of methodical and detailed examination either: breaking down a theme, topic, or situation in order to interpret and study the interrelationships between the parts. and/or of information or data to interpret and study key trends and interrelationships.
Assess	Learners present careful consideration of varied factors or events that apply to a specific situation or identify those which are the most important or relevant and arrive at a conclusion.
Compare and Contrast	Learners can identify the main factors relating to two or more items/situations or aspects of a subject that is extended to explain the similarities, differences, advantages, and disadvantages. This is used to show depth of knowledge through selection and isolation of characteristics.
Create	To produce work in response to a brief or to apply skills and techniques to meet an intention.
Demonstrate	Learners' work or practice shows the ability to carry out and apply knowledge, understanding and/or skills in a practical situation.
Describe	Learners give a clear, objective account in their own words showing recall and, in some cases application, of the relevant features and information about a subject.
Discuss	Explore issues, lines of reasoning and situations, articulating different viewpoints.
Estimate	Give an approximate decision or opinion using previous knowledge or experience.
Evaluate	Review information then bring it together to form a conclusion, drawing on evidence including strengths, weaknesses, alternative actions, relevant data or information. Come to a supported judgement of a subject's qualities and relation to its context.
Explain	Learners' work shows clear details and gives reasons and/or evidence to support an opinion, view, or argument. It could show how conclusions are drawn.
Justify	Learners are able to give reasons or evidence to, support an opinion, or prove something right or reasonable.
Outline	Learners provide a general description or plan showing the essential features of something but not the detail.
Summarise	Briefly present an abstract of the main points.

All levels	
Calculate	Work out a numerical problem, showing how they arrived at their answer.

Appendix 1 – Assessment mapping

Component	Standard	Core principles exam	Portfolio	Written assignment
		External	Internal	Internal
		20%	20%	10%
3D Tools: Creative and Technical 3D Modelling	Understand the basic components of a 3D Model		✓	
	Understand the function of different types of textures		✓	
	Know how to use a 3D Modelling package		✓	
	Understand the benefit of good workflows and efficient techniques for creating 3D models		✓	
	Understand smoothing/subdivision and texture baking		✓	
	Understand the concept of high to low polygon workflow		✓	
	Be able to technically and creatively problem solve in 3D		✓	
	Be able to work within a Brief to ensure models fit within a wider project		✓	
Art Fundamentals for the Games, Animation and VFX Industries	Understand artistic concepts including light, colour, composition, perspective and volume			✓
	Understand how traditional processes have been developed and integrated into digital art software systems and processes for games, animation and VFX			✓
	Be able to demonstrate foundation skills in drawing for different purposes		✓	
Core Principles of Game Design	Know about the core principles of game design	✓		
	Understand the significance of games platforms and technologies on the development of game design	✓	✓	
	Understand the significance of age, gender and culture on game design	✓	✓	
	Be able to critically analyse a range of games from a game play perspective	✓	✓	
Fundamental Animation Skills for the Games, Animation and VFX Industries	Be able to use industry standard animation packages		✓	
	Be able to design and produce an animation sequence		✓	
Fundamental Product	Understand how to design, develop, test and debug computer programs	✓		
	Understand different programming paradigms	✓		

Programming Skills	Understand how to read input from the user and output a result	✓		
	Be able to use control systems to design algorithms	✓		
	Be able to use different types of variables to design data structures	✓		
	Understand the importance of readable and maintainable code	✓		
	Understand how to design, develop, test and debug computer programs	✓		
Maths and Logic Fundamentals for the Games, Animation and VFX Industries	Understand numbers and number systems	✓		
	Be able to employ basic mathematical problem solving skills	✓		
	Understand basic mathematical concepts which are useful for problem solving and simulation	✓		
	Be able to use probability, statistics and random numbers	✓		
VFX Fundamentals for the Games, Animation and VFX Industries	Be able to plan, design and implement a shoot to acquire elements for a visual effect		✓	
	Be able to convert acquired elements from camera in preparation for compositing phase		✓	
	Be able to use compositing tools and techniques to create a sequence that blends live footage with computer		✓	
	Demonstrate an appropriate critical eye for detail and good aesthetic judgement		✓	
	Know how to organise post production pipeline and scheduling		✓	

Appendix 2 – Learner purpose statement

Who is this qualification for?

This qualification may be of particular interest to you if you are a learner who:

- has already completed a Level 2 Games, Animation and/or VFX Skills qualification and now want to study at a higher level/progress your career further within the industry
- already works or volunteers in this sector and wishes to gain recognition for the skills and knowledge previously achieved
- works as an animator, games designer, games tester and wish to progress your career further within the industry
- have a genuine interest in the games, animation and/or VFX industries and wish to transfer from another career
- is working towards progression to an Apprenticeship. A number of visual effects Standards for which this qualification is recognised by employers as progression preparation are available and further games and animation industry Standards are in development

What does this qualification cover?

This qualification has been designed by employers to support you, the learner, to develop your fundamental technical knowledge and skills in games, animation and visual effects. This qualification covers the fundamental skills required in art, animation, visual effects, games design, principles

of 3D design, maths and product programming. Major employers from across these sectors of the creative industries have identified that a knowledge and some skill in all of these subject areas is increasingly essential to the success of their businesses and form part of the recruitment process for new entrants.

Whilst they accept that new entrants will specialise in one or two areas the breadth of some understanding of all the areas in this qualification is the key to success. For example, you may intend to apply for a job as a junior 2D artist in a visual effects house but an understanding of product programming and allied mathematical involvement in the production pipeline will contribute to the success of the team. Or, you may decide to start your own game design business in which case an understanding of production management will be invaluable. This is a synoptic qualification where all components are mandatory i.e. although separately identified they are inextricably linked.

There are seven mandatory components:

3D Tools: Creative and Technical 3D Modelling

The aim of this component is to ensure you understand the fundamental components which make up a 3D model. With knowledge of these basic building blocks, anything can be created in the virtual space. You will also understand the limitations imposed on the use of these components by memory and processing capacity. Knowledge of how 3D models are created, stored and rendered, and the tools and techniques used to construct them is invaluable and transferable across many digital creative industries. Building upon

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the basic principles, this component will ensure you understand what is required to produce a professional high detail 3D model and how to transfer the detail to a production asset. You will learn about smoothing/subdivision and texture baking.

Art Fundamentals for the Games, Animation and VFX Industries

This component will support you to acquire the fundamental knowledge of art concepts and to acquire sufficient skill in drawing (e.g. human and animal figures, real objects) to enable you to contribute to the production of the high-quality images for a games, animation or VFX product that are demanded by industry. You do not need to be a skilled artist. This component has also been designed to introduce you to some of the artists who have been influential on the imagined worlds of game design. You will also be introduced to research and essay writing skills.

Core Principles of Game Design

This component will ensure that you have a solid foundation and understanding of how software technologies affect gameplay across a range of different games platforms. By comparing and evaluating software specifications, you will develop skills to support your learning in technical units including programming. You will be given plenty of opportunity for practical activities.

Fundamental Animation Skills for the Games, Animation and VFX Industries

This component will support you to understand the process of creating an animation. Using industry standard techniques and software, you will source assets and learn how to use functions within the software to create, enhance and animate movement. You will look at how to test functions, produce and manage documentation for future use and will develop skills of evaluation and identifying methods of improvement.

Fundamental Product Programming Skills

This component gives you the basic skills required in order to understand and successfully apply programming concepts used in game development, animation and visual effects. It introduces you to different styles of programming or different ways of thinking about code. These different paradigms are used as design tools, the code often looks very similar at the file level but the way it is structured and the way that it interacts is vastly different. Different paradigms are used in different situations, to solve different problems and by different industries, it is therefore important for you to have an appreciation of these different techniques for designing code.

Maths and Logic Fundamentals for the Games, Animation and VFX Industries

This component will ensure you have the basic skills required in order to understand and successfully apply mathematical concepts used in game development, animation and visual effects. You will develop the skills you need to absorb relatively complicated concepts through the use of experimentation and play. The component will also assist you in developing an understanding of mathematical techniques with the aid of a programming approach. It is designed with exploration and experimentation at its core.

VFX Fundamentals for the Games, Animation and VFX Industries

This component will support you to gain the knowledge and skills to set up a single camera shoot to acquire visual materials (elements) for visual effects projects. You will look at crewing, production planning, location management, health and safety, and acquiring lighting and motion references for use in post-production. You will also look at each step of a visual effects (VFX) 2D production pipeline, from the acquisition of live action elements through to compositing and colour grading.

This qualification is not included in any Apprenticeship Framework or Standard.

How are employers involved in this qualification?

In addition to the components and assessments detailed above, this qualification also provides you with the opportunity for meaningful activity involving employers during your study.

Examples of involvement of industry practitioners:

- 3D Modelling – Framestore and Double Negative
- Virtual Reality Development – Oculus
- Modelling and Project Management Microsoft
- VFX Compositing – Framestore
- Product Journeys, development from idea to market – Chillingo
- Animation – Blue Zoo
- Scrum – CCP
- Modelling timed challenge – Framestore

Which other subjects might complement this qualification?

You could study this qualification alongside English and maths GCSE, where you have not already achieved these, and digital technologies subjects would also be relevant. However this qualification has been designed specifically as a multi-disciplinary programme of study and includes maths, art, programming, games, animation and visual effects.

How does this qualification relate to other similar AIM qualifications?

This qualification forms part of a Suite of Games, Animation and VFX Skills qualifications:

- AIM Qualifications Level 3 Diploma in Games, Animation and VFX Skills
- AIM Qualifications Level Extended Diploma in Games, Animation and VFX Skills

The Level 3 Diploma will enable you to develop fundamental skills in animation, visual effects and game design skills and to learn the requisite elements of maths and programming together with an understanding of artistic concepts and the basic drawing skills that will prepare you to create story and playboards. After this qualification, you can go on to study the Level 3 Extended Diploma which will enable you to acquire more advanced technical skills, fully acquire the experience of completing a synoptic project including the opportunities of learning project management skills and to acquire study skills that offer good preparation for higher level study. The Diploma represents year one of the two-year Extended Diploma.

What further study and/or employment is the qualification designed to lead to?

If you successfully achieve this qualification, there are a wide range of possible job roles in each of the industries, for example you could be a visual effects Animator, Matte Painter, Concept Artist, Modelling Artist or Texture Artist; a games Level Designer, Programmer, Sales Manager or Public Relations Executive or a Composer, Model Maker or a 2D Animator (computer or drawn) in the animation industry. The inclusion of interrelated content supports this by giving you the breadth of skills.

Many learners who successfully complete this Diploma will progress on to the Extended Diploma as explained above. This qualification has been operational since 2015. Students graduating from the Extended Diploma have subsequently progressed to HEIs across the UK and several, including

London South Bank University, Norwich University of the Arts and Teeside are offering unconditional places to students graduating from this qualification.

Who supports this qualification?

This qualification has been developed in partnership with industry, supported by initial funding from UKCES to support the creation and delivery of industry designed qualifications and Apprenticeships in 2015. It has been reviewed in 2017/18 alongside employers with feedback from centres. The following employers support this qualification:

- Blue Zoo Animation
- Creative Assembly
- Double Negative
- Framestore
- Imaginarium
- Microsoft
- MPC
- Sony Interactive Entertainment Europe

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