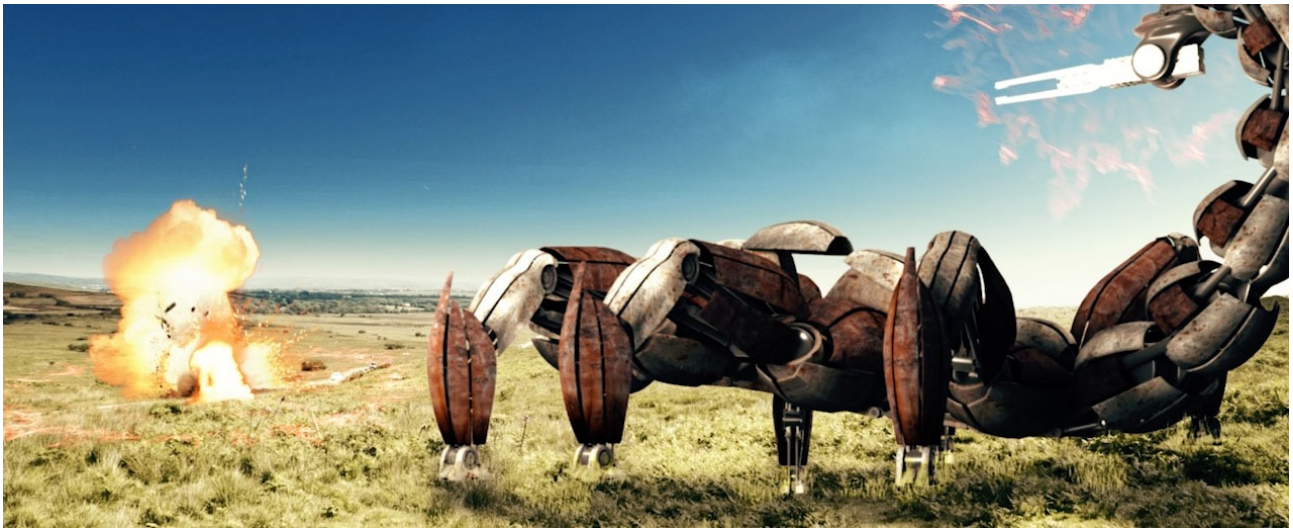
Prifysgol Cymru
Y Drindod Dewi Sant
University of Wales
Trinity Saint David

MA 3DCA PROGRAMME GUIDE:

A Guide to the 3D Computer Animation Programme:

Code (old): **602C & 602F:**
Code (new): MARTSMARTSTDCSH

25-09-2017



The Butterfly Battalion (The final MA movie by the class of 2014-15)

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At the beginning:

There are lots of questions you may want to ask about this programme and you may be feeling anxious about the months ahead so please talk to your course leader or any tutor associated with this programme.

This programme is about learning and developing new skills, encouraging your creativity, and experimentation, amongst many other things.

Remember that computer animation is usually fun to watch, fun to plan and fun to do.

Whether you consider yourself to be artistic, more inclined towards the technical, or anywhere in-between, computer animation has a broad reach and has a career path for most who wish to join the computer animation industry.

Getting the best from this programme however, requires you to be inquisitive, analytical, enthusiastic and hard working.

We hope, therefor, you will learn, develop and enjoy this programme.

Welcome to the MA in 3D Computer Animation.

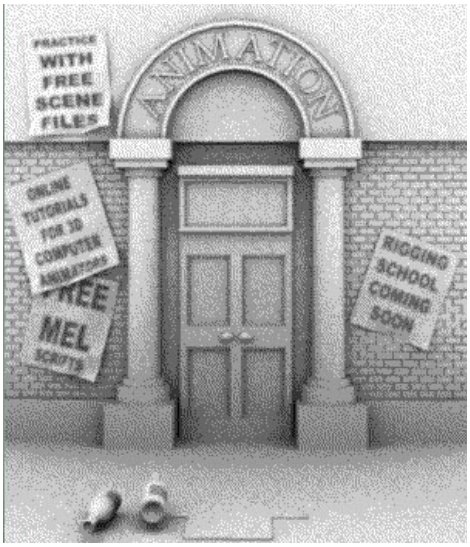
Introduction:
Communication with Students, Tutors & Resources:

Tutorials & Lectures
These are usually held on Tuesday & Thursday afternoons & evenings.

Moodle
Use your login details to access assignments , learning materials, course dependencies and links.

College Email System
Use your login details to communicate with each other and your tutors. Use of private email accounts is discouraged. Please try and log in to your college email system at least twice a day.

The Learning Animation Website:



This website was specially created to support you while you are on the UWTSD MA 3DCA programme.
It is an unofficial site which means that it is supported and managed by Henry Lutman (Programme Director MA 3DCA) but NOT by the university.
Not all modules are supported by the site but some of the more practical ones are.

This website has three points of access:-
learninganimation.co.uk (open access)
Anyone can access this part of the site but some student materials are not available.

learninganimation.co.uk/students (open access)
Failure to log in to this part of the site restricts the use of some student materials.

learninganimation.co.uk/students (restricted access)
Successful log in to this part of the site yields full access to all relevant student materials.

learninganimation.co.uk/strobe (open access)
Designed to get your creativity in gear.

If your long term goal is to TEACH
then the MA 3DCA Qualification should help you to achieve a teaching career in:-
Schools
Colleges
Universities

The programme should also help you to achieve a teaching career in:-
Schools
Colleges
Universities

If your long term goal is to join INDUSTRY,

then the MA 3DCA Qualification is not so important to the UK animation industries.

The programme, however, should help you to achieve a career in:-
TV Broadcast Content
TV Commercials Content
General Digital Media Content
Feature Film Content
Computer Games Content
Computer Games Promotion
Corporate Sector Promotion
Corporate Sector Training
Education Sector Training

Topics Included on the MA 3DCA

You will be learning a great deal while you on this programme and listed below are some of the topics that are included.
How to research and formulate ideas and concepts.
How to produce a film that is, or includes computer generated content.
How to animate using standard industrial software and technique.
How to explore and use standard industrial applications in animation projects
How to write a story for a animation production.
How to plan an animation production.
How to manage an animation production.
How to execute an animation production.
How to present the progress of an animation production.
How to Post Produce an animation production

MA Assignment Types:

You will be assessed while you are on this programme, usually at the end of each Semester and the assessments normally come in two main types.

Presentations
The first type is a presentation where you deliver a formal presentation of your work using Powerpoint or other digital media to your tutors and colleagues.

Written Work
The second type is written work which is handed in and marked by your tutors.

The Programme Structure:

The programme is made up of 9 separate modules and each one deals with a topic which is either about animation or supports the activity of animation.
These modules are spread over three semesters (three blocks of time).

SEMESTER 1 (60 credits in total)
October to January End.

DAY of week	Module Name	Credit Value	Tutor	Presentation	Written
Tuesday	Research Methods M7X00663	10	Scott Smith		
Tuesday	Computer Animation M7X00658	20 of a total of 30	Henry Lutman		
Thursday	Production Methods M7X00662	10 of a total of 20	Henry Lutman		
Thursday	Visual Studies M7X00665	10	Scott Smith		
Thursday	Storyworlds M7X00664	10	Scott Smith		

SEMESTER 2 (60 credits in total)
February to June.

DAY of week	Module Name	Credit Value	Tutor	Presentation	Written
Tuesday	Computer Animation M7X00658	10 of a total of 30	Henry Lutman		
Tuesday	Production Methods M7X00662	10 of a total of 20	Henry Lutman		
Tuesday	Production Management M7X00661	10	Henry Lutman		
Thursday	Pre-Production M7X00660	20	Scott Smith		
Thursday	Post Production M7X00659	10	Henry Lutman		

SEMESTER 3 (60 credits in total)
June to Mid September
Major Group Project (60 credits total)

DAY of week	Module Name	Credit Value	Tutor	Presentation	Written
Thursday	Major Project M7X00666	60	Henry Lutman Scott Smith		

If you are not sure about any of the information above then do not be shy but ask your tutor. He or she will not mind, in the least, explaining this information.

Important & Useful General Information:

You will need the following information in order to fully participate in the MA in 3D Computer Animation programme.

The University Email System:

Your tutors will sometimes communicate with you via Microsoft “Outlook” which is part of the “Office 365” package on your college computer. Access to your college email account is accessible from your computer desk top through the use of “Internet Explorer”, provided you are successfully logged in using your own personal login details.
You can also log in to your college email account from any other computer providing it is connected to the internet.
You should log in to your college email account at least twice a day in order to check whether there are any changes to the timetable or other important information from the university or your tutors.
If you have any difficulties accessing the college email system then contact the university IT help desk at ITServiceDesk@uwtsd.ac.uk or call 01792 481134.

The Moodle System:

All your Assignment briefs which have to be successfully completed while you are a student of the MA 3DCA programme are available on the Moodle website.
Use the link below to connect to the “Moodle” website and use your normal college login details to gain access.

http://moodle.uwtsd.ac.uk/

The following information is also available from the Moodle website:-

Links to:-
Level 7 Programme of Study Hand Book 2017-18.
Semester Calendar Key Dates which include Assignment completion or presentation dates.
Your weekly timetable.
Programme Guide to the MA 3DCA
Module Guides.
Other General Guides.

A link to the Learning Animation website for support material and dependancies needed for the programme modules.
You can also use the following links below:-

http://www.learninganimation.co.uk/
http://www.learninganimation.co.uk/students/
http://www.learninganimation.co.uk/stobe/

If you have any difficulties accessing Moodle then you must contact the university IT help desk at ITServiceDesk@uwtsd.ac.uk or call 01792 481134.

If you have any difficulty accessing the Learning Animation Site and/or the programme dependancies then contact Henry Lutman at henry.lutman@uwtsd.ac.uk

Saving Your Animation Work:

Most of your work that you will be producing during your time on this programme will be in the form of digital files. Typically these might be MAYA scene files, Movie files, Word documents and PDF files. It is, therefor, vitally important that you never loose any of the work needed for you to progress through the programme or to present at assessment time.

To help mitigate any loss of digital college work you should:-

Incremental Saves:

Always try and save you work incrementally and not repeatedly over the same file. Over the period of 2 hours you should be saving between four and eight incremental files.
If you don't save incrementally then your work could be susceptible to digital corruption.

Storage & Backup:

Never rely on just storing files on your studio computer. These can get wiped periodically by IT to save space.
Use a reliable memory stick or portable hard drive to store your work and back it up to a Cloud system or second device. Maintaining copies of your work on two different physical devices apart from the studio computer should insure that your work does not get lost.

Lost or Corrupted Work is NO Excuse:

If you fail to show files needed for an assignment presentation or fail to hand in work to the tutor on the day stipulated because you have accidentally lost your work or it has become

corrupted then you may fail the module. It is up to you to make sure that your work is safe at all times.

File Formats:

Written:
Written work for assignments should be printed on A4 plain paper but digital copies should be saved in either .doc or docx format.

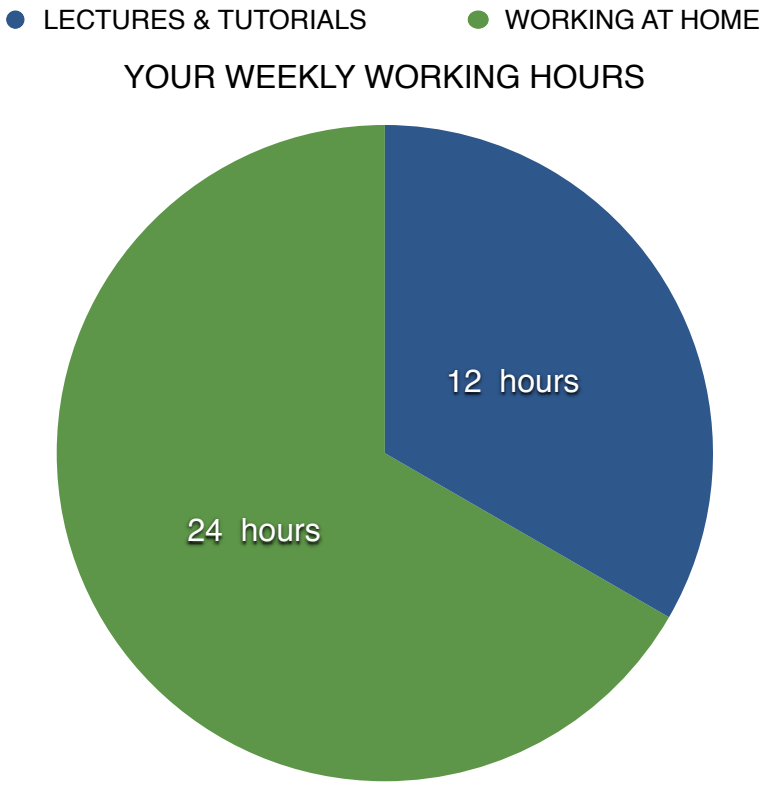
Title Page:
Make sure that your full name, Student Reference, Assignment, Module and Programme name are on the title page.

Video:
Video or Movie files should be saved in either .mov with h264 compression or a .mp4 format.
Screen resolution should be to British broadcast format of square pixels at 720 (1280 * 720) or 1080 (1920 * 1080).

Slates:
Make sure that your full name, Assignment, Module and Programme name are on a title screen for at least three seconds before your animation begins.

Your Assignments and Assessments.

Most of the work you will do on this MA programme will be in the form of video productions or animated sequences. There will also be some assignments that require you to do written work.
Your assignments, a copy of which can be found on the Moodle website, explain what your task is and tells you about what you are expected to do to complete the assignment.



Your Working Hours:

Although you will be spending around 12 hours per week in lectures and tutorials, you are also expected to work a further 24 hours per week on your own either at your college residence or in one of the college studios. In a normal work place, like an animation company or games studio, you would be expected to work AT LEAST 40 hours a week, so a total of 36 hours is reasonable within a college context.

Planning Your Working Hours:

You should always plan and manage your time with regard to executing your assignments. Never leave time management to chance. Layout a calendar starting with the finishing date of your assignment. That's the date that it has to be presented or handed in. Working backwards, subtract the number of days that you think you will need to execute the assignment and then subtract a little bit more in case something goes wrong.

With my own projects I calculate how much time I need to do each process. If one or two of the processes are new, then I need to allow extra time to experiment and explore how to execute the processes effectively. I also need to add extra time for a review and any alterations I may want to do to make my project extra special. Then I add on a little bit more time for luck.

If you have more than one assignment to carry out for deadlines which are quite close to each other, which is quite common, then you need to divide you time up sensibly between the two so that you can do both in parallel.

Ifs you want to be really clever, then use scheduling software like the one on the learning animation web site, "The Schedule" which has been specially designed for your use.

Working Individually:

Where an assignment requires you to work individually, then that is exactly what you must do.

You may accept help in the form of advice and information from your colleagues or fellow students but they are NOT allowed, under any circumstances, to do any work for you.

Sometimes your tutor may help you by demonstrating a difficult part of a process but more usually you should try and solve difficult processes yourself and always ask for help from your tutor if you are stuck. The online notes available on the learning Animation website are there to help you when you are working on your own.

Submitting work for an assessment which is not your own, will cause you to fail the assignment and put you at high risk of failing the entire MA programme.

The person whose work you submit as your own will also risk failing the assignment and also be at high risk of failing the entire MA programme.

Written work is automatically checked by "Turnitin", a computer programme which not only checks for similarities between student work but also checks for anything which is copied from the internet. Work which is copied from another student or the internet is not allowed, will cause you to fail the assignment and put you at high risk of failing the entire MA programme.

The Assignment Specification:

Always read the Assignment Specification completely by studying every section. It is important that you understand all of it and follow the project brief EXACTLY. Don't forget any part of it or add anything which has not been asked for.

If you are still not sure what is required or feel that you need more information, then ask your tutor.

Interpreting the assignment specification:

Be very careful when interpreting the assignment specification. You should read it carefully before embarking on your final submissions. If you are not sure, then you should ask your tutor to explain the specification carefully for you.

If it helps, make a list of what the assignment specification requires. If you think you should add something to your assignment submission video like music, sound effects, textures or backgrounds then check the assignment specification to see if it has asked for it. Unless the specification has specified music, sound effects, textures or backgrounds, then it is not a good idea for you to waste time on these elements but instead, concentrate on improving your animation by way of motion and timing.

If you are not sure about what to include then look at the “Assessment & Feedback” section of the assignment specification which lists all the criteria that will be used to assess your mark.

Your Presentation:

You will be presenting your work to your tutors and fellow students by showing your work on a big screen while explaining to your colleagues about how you have planned and executed it. After your presentation, the tutors and fellow students will ask you questions about your work. Your presentation may be recorded for later viewing by tutors and external examiners.

When preparing, make sure that all necessary files needed for your presentation are loaded on a memory stick from which you can easily transfer them to the lecturer’s computer for display on the studio big screen. All video animation sequences must be clearly slated at the beginning of the video with your name, project title. Any MAYA scene files that have been requested should also be transferred to the lecturer’s computer.

Don’t forget to complete the Assignment Specification form and hand it in to your tutor.

You must render or playblast your sequences then post produce, slate and compress it using After Effects.

Never to use any application on the tutors computer apart from presentation packages like Microsoft PowerPoint, Apple Keynote, image readers, movie players and special executables. Using applications like MAYA, Photoshop or After Effects are NOT ALLOWED. Use screen shots if you need to show processes based around these types of applications.

Never ever be late for a presentation. You could loose marks if you are. Make sure that all your work required for the presentation is made ready on the tutor’s computer well before the start time of the presentation.

Your Written Work:

Although you are not allowed to copy text directly from the internet, you are allowed to quote other authors and from material on the internet as long as you make clear that it is not your original work and providing you do not use a disproportionate amount of quoted text. All quoted or copied text should be clearly attributed to the original author or source. When in doubt, ask your tutor for advice.
All your written submissions must be in duplicate (two copies). One copy should **ALWAYS** be accompanied by a completed copy of the **"Assignment Specification"** which is given to you at the time of hand out.
You should not print your written submissions the same day as the hand in day but print them the day before so that if anything should go wrong then you have time to rectify it.
All your written submissions must be uploaded to "Turnitin" by midnight of the hand in day.

How to gain the MA in 3D Computer Animation:

To pass the MA in 3D Computer Animation you must basically pass every module within the MA 3DCA programme. There are exceptions to the statement above but the rules are complicated. If you need more detail then look at section 6.8.2 Page 87 of the Academic Quality Handbook 2016/17 which is available from the library or from your tutor.

How to gain a Pass Mark for a Module:

You need to gain an overall percentage mark of 50% or above for a particular module in order to pass it. This means, for example, that if module is made up of two assignments and the marks for each of the assignments are of equal weighting then you need to achieve an overall average of 50% or more to pass the module.
An example might be the Production Methods module which consists of two assignments equally weighted at 50% each. If in assignment one you achieved only 40% but in assignment two, you achieved 60%, then you would achieve an overall averaged mark of 50% and therefor pass the module. . If in assignment one you achieved only 20% but in assignment two you achieved 60%, then you would achieve an overall averaged mark of 40% and therefor fail the module.
Be aware however, some modules have assignments of different weightings. An example is the 3D Computer Animation module. The first assignment is worth 60% of the overall module mark and the second is worth 40% of the overall module mark.

Presenting work that is not your own at assessment & presentations:

Using work which is not your own:
Presenting any work which is not completely of your own making is not acceptable unless you make it very clear which part of the work is not yours.
In cases where you want to present work which is not completely of your own making or endeavour, you must:-

1. Make sure that you have written permission from your module tutor or programme director.
AND
2. Make sure that you have written permission from the author of work you are using, whether it is an individual or an institution.
AND
3. Make sure that you acknowledge the source of the work, or part thereof, by providing a reference to the institution or individual who is the originator of the work.
In Pre-Production, this should appear in an appendix within your pre-production documents.
In the Major Project, this should appear in any documentation that you prepare including the Document of Intent, Final Report & Document of Critical Reflection.

Plagiarism:
Where work is not completely of your own making or endeavour and if you attempt to pass it off, or present it, as your own work, then it is a very serious infringement of university regulations and is known as plagiarism. This could lead to you failing the MA programme.

A link to the university regulations is below. The section which covers the plagiarism topic is:-
8 About Unfair Practice and Plagiarism
8.1 What is unfair practice and plagiarism?

http://www.uwtsd.ac.uk/media/uwtsd-website/content-assets/documents/academic-office/regulations-student-guides/university-regulations-postgraduate-taught-student-guide.pdf

The MA Group Project (Part 2):
Regarding the Major Project, it can be difficult for the student cohort (production crew) to provide all the skills needed to complete all processes within a project, especially if the cohort is a small one. In normal circumstances, the sort of skills missing from a cohort could be acting, voice-overs, music composition, music recording and others. In these cases, it is quite normal for students to seek help from another department or even to commission work from outside the university.
In some circumstances, there could be skills missing from the cohort that are more essential to the work flow like rigging or texturing. In these circumstances, outside help can be sought but first, you must seek help from a UWTSD university tutor, to see if there is any other way of solving the shortfall, like extra tuition or tutorials which will help improve or re-enforce these skills.
There are processes and activities which have to be provided by the cohort and CANNOT be outsourced, animation being the obvious example.

If you are not sure or are confused by what work you can present as your own, or what work can be outsourced, then ask for help from your tutor.

If you have any questions about the above then please contact Henry Lutman.

Feedback:

So what exactly is feedback? Feedback is any response from a teacher in regard to a student's performance or behaviour. It can be verbal, written or gestural. The purpose of feedback in the learning process is to improve a student's performance, definitely not put a damper on it. The ultimate goal of feedback is to provide students with an "I can do this" attitude.
Written by Laura Reynolds from the website opencolleges.edu.au.

Feedback generally refers to the process where the student can guided by the tutor on an individual basis.
Feedback is an essential part of all education and training programmes. It helps learners to maximise their potential at different stages of their development. It raises awareness of strengths and areas for improvement, and helps identify actions that can be taken to improve performance.

Feedback can be seen as informal (for example in day-to-day encounters between teachers and students or trainees, between peers or between colleagues) or formal (for example as part of a written assessment or presentation). However, there is no sharp dividing line between assessment and teaching in the area of giving feedback on learning. Feedback is part of the overall dialogue or interaction between teacher and learner, not a one-way communication.

What happens if I don't turn up?

If you don't turn up for a presentation or don't hand in your work on the date specified in the Assignment specification then you will be given a maximum of one additional week to prepare for a second attempt. If this happens then your mark will be capped because of late submission.

Penalties for late submission:

Up to one week late, maximum mark of 50% for first attempt.
Work cannot be accepted after one week and will be recorded as a non-submission (0%).

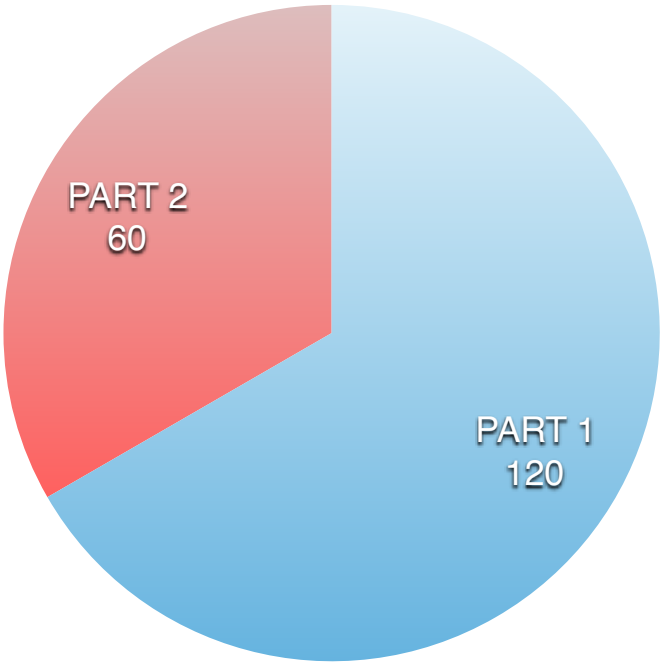
A FINAL CHECK LIST:

A final check list is usually incorporated into the MA 3DCA Assignment Specification which reminds you again of what you need to include.

About PART 2:

Part 2 of the MA is sometimes referred to as semester 3 and runs from around the middle of June to the middle of September.
Part 2 is where you will execute and finish your group project.
Part 2 is worth 60 credits.

Relationship of Part 2 with Part 1



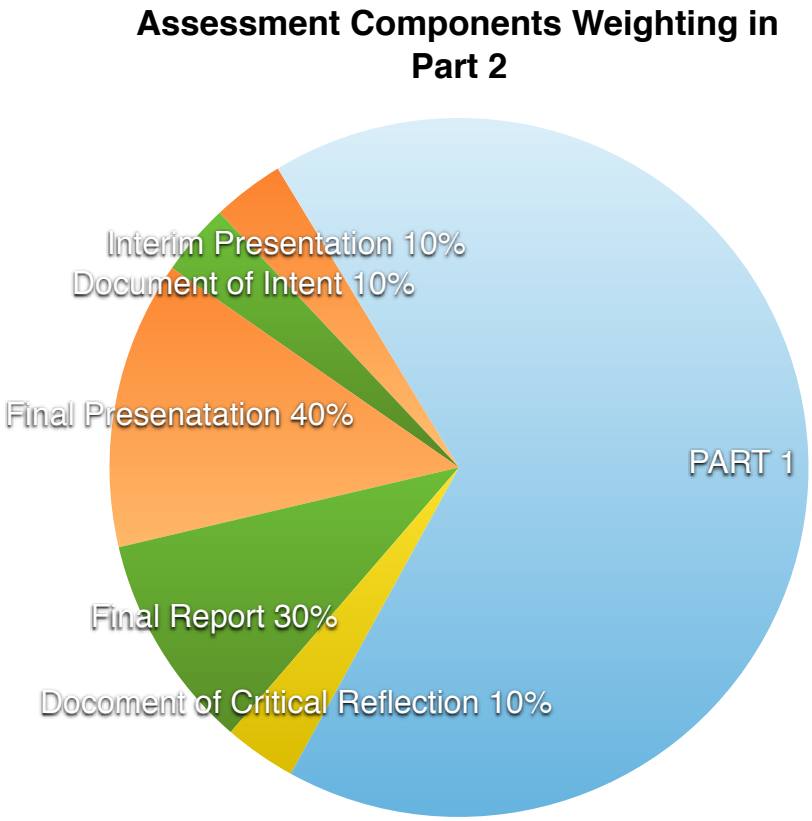
Working During the Summer:

You are required to work, starting in June, working around 35 hours a week on your group project until approximately the end of August, when the group project will be completed.
The hours you work each day can be decided by the group but it should be at least 7 hours a day.
You will be joined by your tutor for 4 hours, usually, on a Thursday at midday. You will be given notice if this day or if the starting time should change. This is when you can show your work to the tutor, ask for help or advice with regard to your work or any issue regarding the project or production team.
Do not take days off or take leave without permission from your tutor. Taking days off without permission is very disruptive to the rest of your team and is not fair to those that are continuing to work.
If you are ill or poorly then let your tutor know via email. If you need a day off then talk to your tutor or send an email.

Your Group Project:

For many of you, this may be your final opportunity to develop your creative and technical skills within an academic environment. It is important therefor, to enjoy the experience as much as possible by working hard and being inquisitive. You should consider taking some creative or technical risks with your work as part of your education. It not always possible to do this once you are outside the academic environment.

Part 2 of the MA is assessed by five submissions, two are presentations and the rest are written. The Assessment component weightings are represented in the pie chart above



Work hard and enjoy your work!