

See discussions, stats, and author profiles for this publication at: <https://www.researchgate.net/publication/360835290>

# ANIMATION IN SCOTLAND 2020: A snapshot into the Animation industry within Scotland, with recommendations for future developments.

**Presentation** · February 2020

DOI: 10.13140/RG.2.2.24600.67849

CITATIONS

0

READS

96

**1 author:**



[Jonathan James Mortimer](#)  
Edinburgh Napier University

6 PUBLICATIONS 1 CITATION

SEE PROFILE

Some of the authors of this publication are also working on these related projects:



The Skills Gap in the animation/vfx sector in Scotland [View project](#)



Inclusive animation training & education [View project](#)

Thursday 27<sup>th</sup> February 2020

# ANIMATION IN SCOTLAND 2020:

A SNAPSHOT INTO THE ANIMATION  
INDUSTRY WITHIN SCOTLAND, WITH  
RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FUTURE  
DEVELOPMENTS.

HOSTED BY:

**Animation Skillnet**

14-16 Lord Edward Street  
Temple Bar, Dublin 2,  
D02 YC63, Ireland

## OVERALL AIM

To improve how animation is taught.

## TODAY'S AIM

To discussion challenges faced by industry professionals, organisations and educators, as well as gauge potential interest in further discussions and research in this area.

*“Our Animation Community”*



©2020 Image copyright MOVE SUMMIT

# AGENDA

- Format of slides
- Introduction
- 10 years of misconception & misunderstandings
- 1. Skills Gap / Knowledge Gap
- 2. Skills Gap Education
- 3. Skills Balance Industry
- 4. Looking at Placements & Internships
- 5.1 Information on Industry
- 5.2 Information on Industry – continued
- 6. Industry's recommendations Curriculum
- Training for animation comparison
- 8.2 Industry training lecturers – Proposal
- 8.2 Industry training lecturers – Case study
- Training for Animation Lecturers
- Other points
- Closing comments
- Further information
  - Animation/vfx sector in Scotland [Animation Scotland]
  - Animation/vfx studios [Animation Scotland]
  - Animation/Media courses [FE & HE]
  - Animation resources & events

# FOCUS GROUP FORMAT OF SLIDES

## INDUSTRY (Left)

- Results taken from interviews with industry professionals and presented in: The 'Skills Gap' in animation/VFX industry in Scotland.

*[Individual interviews & transcriptions over 11 months]*

- 18x Industry professionals (participates)
- A diverse sample of professionals from within the animation sector was taken; animators, producers and writers
- Part of wider research into industry's thoughts on how animation is taught
- Focus on the Animation/VFX sector in Scotland

## EDUCATION (Right)

- Results taken from Survey: Exploring the views of and challenges face by educators in FE & HE.

*[Survey via Survey Monkey & LinkedIn – 1 month]*

- 17x Industry professionals (participates)
- 100% of participates identified as currently delivering animation
- 64.71% FE / 23.53% HE / 11.76% Both
- 64.71% Lecturer / 29.41% Course leader / 5.88% Manager
- 76.47% Scottish / 23.53% English

QUESTION POSED TO FOCUS GROUP (Bottom)

# INTRODUCTION

*“...developing a symbiotic relationship with industry and education, to collaborate in the future development of the Scottish animation sector...”*

Mortimer, J. (2018),

# POINT OF CONTENTION

The status quo in relation to animation training, education & talent develop in Scotland, and quite possibly the rest of the UK, is not working. Certainly not for everyone.



*"You're here because if you were world class. You'd be doing it"*

*Animation  
HMP, FE  
& HE*

*"Animation is not taught  
in Scotland"*

*"We need more  
apprenticeships  
& Mentors"*

*"Love to.  
But no time"*

*"2D is dead"*

## **10 YEARS OF MISCONCEPTIONS & MISUNDERSTANDINGS**

*"The problem is software & money"*

*"You just colour-in and doodle"*

**Quotes I have experienced while  
teaching animation & working in  
the Animation industry**

*"Those who can't  
do, teach.  
And those who  
can't teach, teach  
gym".*

*Woody Allen  
(1977) "Annie Hall"*

*"There's no money in the budget"*

*"Education is a death sentence for your career"*

*"Studios need to give back"*

*"Bums on seats"*

*"Unis & Colleges have plenty of money"*

*"Industry would never agree"*

*"If you want to do that. Do it in your own time"*

# PERSONAL DRIVE

I want to reclaim the original quote and embroider it in animation education & training. So that this sets a positive change for sector development & growth.

*“Those who know, do. Those that understand, teach”*

Aristotle (384 BC - 322 BC).

*“Those who know, do.  
Those that understand, teach”*

Aristotle  
(384 BC - 322 BC)

*“He who can, does.  
He who cannot, teaches”*

George Bernard Shaw (1856 - 1950)

*“Those who can't do, teach.  
And those who can't teach, teach  
gym”.*

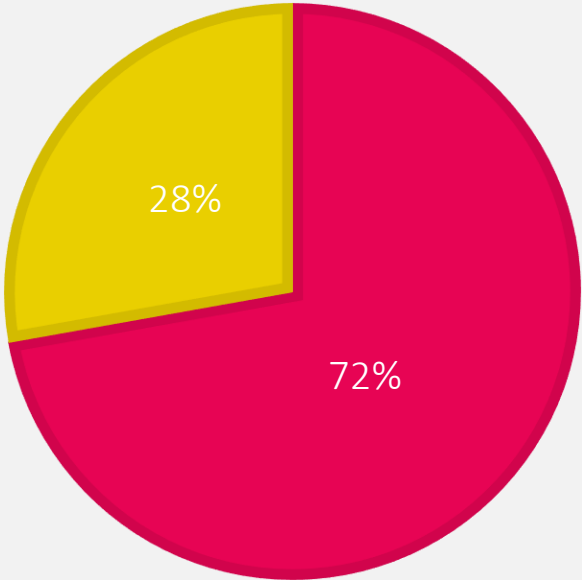
Woody Allen (1977)  
“Annie Hall”



# #. SKILLS GAP | KNOWLEDGE GAP

## INDUSTRY

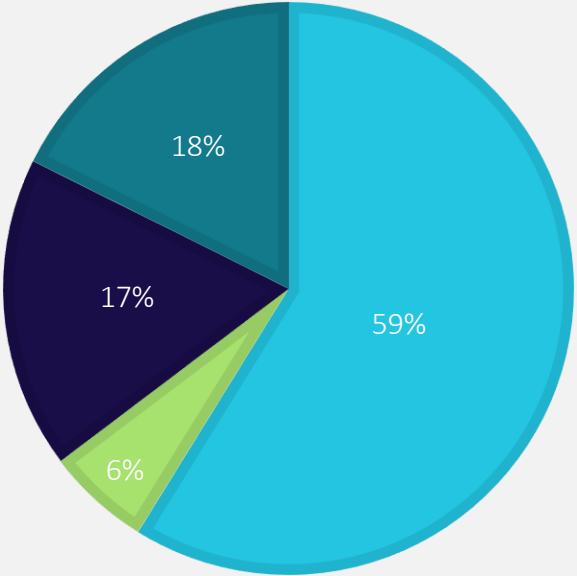
■ Knowledge gap ■ Skills gap



72.2% of industry indicated there is a Knowledge gap.

## EDUCATION

■ Yes ■ No ■ Unsure ■ No answer



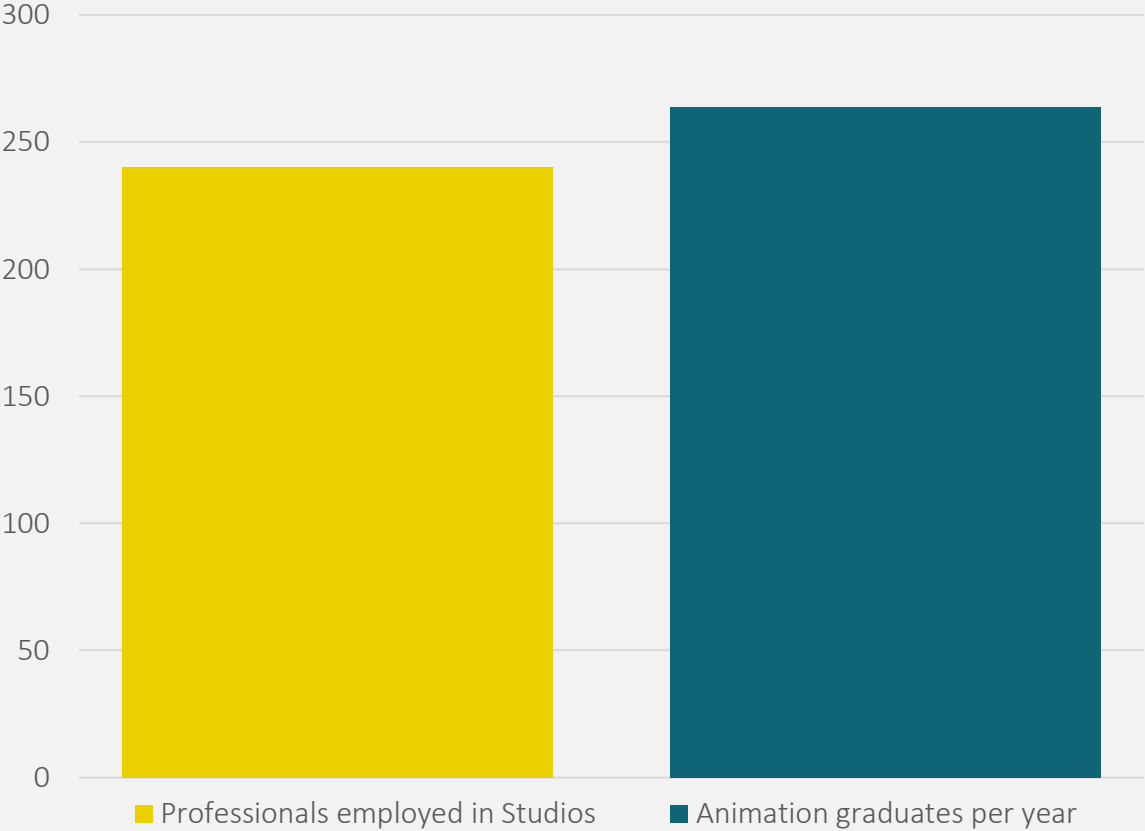
59% of education indicated there is a Skills gap.

SHOULD WE BETTER INFORM STUDENTS & STAFF ABOUT THE SECTOR?



# #. COMPARISON INDUSTRY WITH GRADUATES

\*Figures based on Scotland [2019]



Estimate of 240 animation/vfx professionals employed in the sector.  
\*This figure does not include freelancers.

Animation Scotland [2018]

Low estimate of animation/VFX graduates per year [FE + HE]  
22 students per stream (1) x 12 courses = 264 animation graduates per year.

List of animation courses to follow

ARE WE TEACHING ANIMATION TOO GENERALLY?



# #. DEFINING THE ANIMATION SECTOR

EU Def; Micro enterprise,  
fewer than 10 employees  
and an annual turnover or  
balance sheet below  
€2 million (£1.7M)

## **MICRO-BUSINESS SECTOR [SCOTLAND]**

I propose that the Animation/VFX  
sector in Scotland; is primarily a  
Micro-business sector by the EU  
definition.

MICRO – SMALL – MEDIUM

MICRO  
90%+

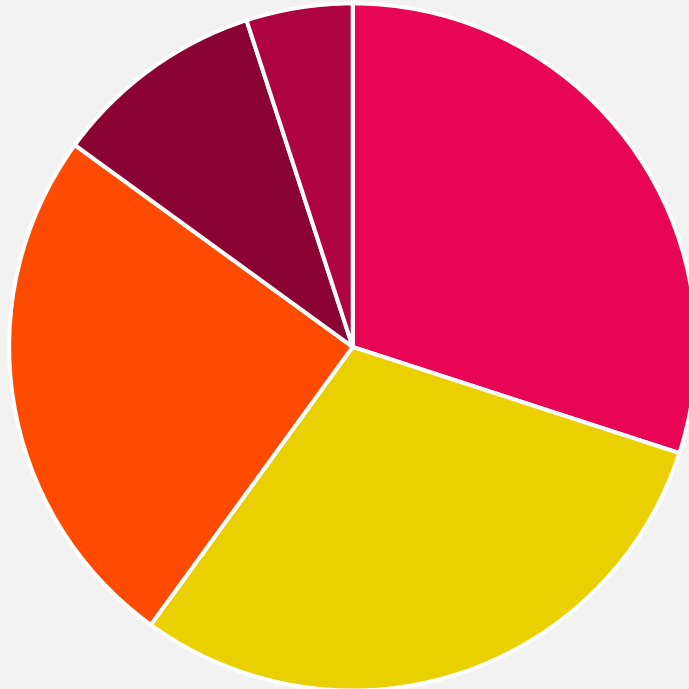
WE NEED TO  
RETHINK TRAINING  
& EDUCATION TO  
RESPOND

WHAT ARE YOUR THOUGHTS – ON THIS POINT & ITS POTENTIAL IMPACT?

# #. INFORMATION ON INDUSTRY

## INDUSTRY

Example: Industry demand within 3D production



Better inform students of industry demand on posts: the challenges and limitations

\*Asset creation 30%, Animation 30%, Lighting artist 25%, Character design & concept art 5% and Production coordination 10%.

Provided by a Small 3D studio – subject to change per studio.

## EDUCATION

INFORMATION ON LOCAL INDUSTRY WHICH WOULD BE HELPFUL TO STUDENTS/GRADUATES

Roles & Skills in demand from industry [9]

- |   |  |
|---|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Insight into working practices [4]</li><li>• Up-to-date list of 'Who's who' [4]</li></ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Working Placements &amp; Internships [3]</li><li>• How animations are created (Case study) [3]</li><li>• Masterclass opportunities [3]</li></ul> |
|---|--|

TEACH THE DIVERSITY OF THE ANIMATION SECTOR?

# #. SKILLS GAP EDUCATION

A - REPEATED POINTS	B - INDIVIDUAL POINTS
TIME & UNDERSTANDING	STUDENT SELECTION PROCESS & STUDENTS
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Lack of time &amp; depth of projects (3)</li><li>• Course is too short (2)</li><li>• Lack of work placements (2)</li><li>• Education does not align with industry (2)</li><li>• Pressure to be a Jack-of-all trades in college while there are specific roles in industry (2)</li><li>• Misunderstanding from management about animation – what it requires (2)</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Not for the best graduates</li><li>• Forced to accept unsuitable students – making a student skills gap on the course</li><li>• Prefer to challenge students</li><li>• Lack of industry knowledge</li><li>• Sandwich course years are a factor</li><li>• Concern over soft-skills</li><li>• Students have to be a very high standard</li><li>• Lack of time to develop &amp; update software</li><li>• Industry team work not covered in education</li><li>• Always a big leap from education to industry</li><li>• Concern over students with a lack of confidence &amp; social skills</li><li>• Lack of in-depth knowledge of tools</li></ul>

SHOULD IT BE MANDATORY FOR EDUCATION TO ASK FOR A PORTFOLIO?



# #. SKILLS BALANCE INDUSTRY

1 – ART FOCUS	2 – PRODUCTION FOCUS
'Fundamental skills' base in how animation is taught. [33.3%]	A need for developing future leaders of the sector. [11.1%]
<p>Fundamental skills being defined as; -</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- Life drawing</li><li>- Developing stronger draftmanship</li><li>- Storyboarding skills</li><li>- A dedicated 2D animator or 2D specialist in every institution</li><li>- Continuously developing a portfolio.</li><li>- Traditional Art</li><li>- Getting into the mind-set of the character</li><li>- Develop a core skill as well as identifying their secondary skill/s</li><li>- More feedback - constructive and helpful advice</li></ul>	<p>Developing future leaders of the sector, to drive and grow the sector.</p> <p>Producing more young people with a creative confidence and vision, to inspire &amp; lead a crew.</p>

SHOULD WE TEACH SKILLS FOR SPECIFIC ROLES IN ANIMATION?



# #. SKILLS BALANCE INDUSTRY - continued

3 – TUTORS/LECTURERS	FIT FOR PUROUSE?
<p>Concerns that Universities and Colleges do not hire animation professionals. [27.8%]</p>	<p><b>INDUSTRY</b></p> <p>27.8% of industry; animation is not taught in Scotland, not fit for purpose or education being detached from industry.</p>
<p>Possible Skills gap with lecturers/education.</p> <p>Concerns over some lecturers with no experience or interest in the animation/VFX sector.</p>	<p><b>EDUCATION</b></p> <p>11.8% of education; education does not align with industry needs.</p>

ARE CURRENT COURSES FIT FOR PURPOSE?



# #. ANIMATION FOCUS

## INDUSTRY

**TV / Feature:** Difference in turn-around.

Format	Expectation (Animation)
TV	3-5 seconds per day
Feature	10 seconds every 2-3 weeks

Studio (No. staff)	Hiring expectation (generalised)
Small (2-10)	Primary skill flexible skillset
Large (50+)	Hired for a specific role in pipeline

**Junior / Senior levels:** Often seen as two levels in a studio, Junior and Senior. Who both do similar tasks, but with different responsibilities and level of complexities.

## EDUCATION

### CHALLENGES FACED DELIVERING ANIMATION

Time to develop materials [8]  
Inadequate resources / access to resources [7]

- Keeping own skills up to date [5]
- Insufficient time in the course [4]
- Lack of understanding of animation [3]
- Keeping industry relevant [3]

- Lack of funding [2]
- Curriculum does not match practice [2]
- Problems with SQA framework [2]

SHOULD THE FOCUS BE MORE ON TV ANIMATION?



# #. INDUSTRY'S RECOMMENDATIONS CURRICULUM

<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Production Pipeline</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Addressing production / studio conventions</li></ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Animation Production</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Animation production coordination</li></ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Proper naming conventions for files</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Interview advice</li></ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• The soft skills of work practice</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Portfolio and show-reel guidance</li></ul>

MORE EMPHASE ON SHOWREELS & PORTFOLIOS?

HOW COULD THE CURRICULUM BE IMPROVED?



# #. TRAINING FOR ANIMATION – Comparison from lecturers

## A - LECTURERS

Q: TUTORS/LECTURER CPD OPPORTUNITIES FOCUSED TOWARDS ANIMATION WITH INDUSTRY

Current studio workflows [4]  
Software skills [4]

- Updating 3D Skillset (AR/VR)[3]

- Any & All training [2]
- Accreditation & Certification [2]
- Training specific to job roles [2]

## B - STUDENTS

Q: INFORMATION ON LOCAL INDUSTRY WHICH WOULD BE HELPFUL TO STUDENTS/GRADUATES

Roles & Skills in demand from industry [9]

- Insight into working practices [4]
- Up-to-date list of 'Who's who' [4]

- Working Placements & Internships [3]
- How animations are created (Case study) [3]
- Masterclass opportunities [3]

SHOULD LECTURERS BE LIFE-TIME STUDENTS OF ANIMATION?

Teaching animation more engineering or medicine

*"More Industry focus"*

*CPD Opportunity w/ industry*

16.7% industry participates mentioned that they were inspired by their lecturers,

Primary skill

*"We need more apprenticeships & Mentors"*

Secondary skills

Experience of different specialism & roles

*"Those who know, do. Those that understand, teach"*

Aristotle (384 BC - 322 BC)

# TRAINING FOR ANIMATION LECTURERS

## In-studio focused animation training for animation tutors/lecturers

[INSPIRE] Industry

professionals in art based roles, can learn new skills.

Dual Professional / Practitioner

*'Practice-informed learning'*

- Developing Industry experience & networks
- Improved communication between sectors
- Improved studio & industry insight

Dual training of skills & opportunity For both sectors

Government funding & support

Zone of proximal development

Guest lecturers

Shared learning experience

*"Studios cannot afford it by ourselves"*

Vygotsky

# #. INDUSTRY TRAINING FOR LECTURERS - proposal

Proposal to further investigate; studio focused training for animation tutors & lecturers.

Target audience of an estimated; 12- 15x animation tutors / lecturers / course leaders in Scotland.  
As means to Influence and better inform the larger student and graduate group.

(1) Training focus	(2) Selection process	(3) Apprenticeships
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>To give greater understanding of the inner studio process, the diverse studio roles, while experiencing it as part of the studio team.</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Identify lecturer primary &amp; secondary skills (previous experience)</li><li>Explore; a one day or half day release CPD program for lecturers.</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>There is currently no exact specific Modern / Graduate Apprenticeship framework bespoke for Animation.</li><li>Potential for apprenticeships and/or CPD opportunities for lecturers.</li></ul>

COULD AN LECTURER APPRENTICESHIP MODEL WORK?

# #. INDUSTRY TRAINING FOR LECTURERS – case study

Length / training:	3x month traineeship as a Production Coordinator, at a local animation studio
Contract:	Part-time – 2x days a week – Freelance temporary contract
Interview process:	I had a formal interview with the studio, to discuss my skills and what I could bring to the studio. [Secondary skills: graphic design, storyboarding & 2D Animation]

Similarities in software tools used in each sector; to dispense feedback & monitor projects	
Shotgun [Industry]	Moodle [Education]

Reflective notes:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- Surprised by the similarities in my role as a lecturer and as a production coordinator.</li><li>- Fantastic opportunity to gain experience in a new role. Witnessed the inner workings of a studio and their quality standards for show-reels and portfolios.</li></ul>

CAN WE GET LECTURERS INTO STUDIOS - TRAINEES?



# 9. OTHER POINTS

## INDUSTRY

---

- Stressed the importance of the MOVE summit in providing students with a direct link to industry for at least a few days per year.
- 11.1% participants concerned with the self-regulated nature of education. “It seems to be felt self-regulatory, each individual college seems to regulate itself.”
- Knowledge of Toon Boom may be a good transferable skill and in more demand across the UK.
- There are still students making it into industry. Progress is being made, must continue to work with education and government to make changes. Certain responsibility of both industry and education to do better for the students.
- Support from Creative Scotland, Screen Scotland and the Scottish Government.

## EDUCATION

---

- The majority of survey participants, praised the start of research and would welcome further discussion.
- Don't have time to engage.
- Perception that FE is prohibited from purchasing decent equipment.
- Government or industry should step in to help.
- Video training repository for students (free).
- Flexible mind-sets between sectors.
- Source/s of funding.

*"We are what we  
repeatedly do.  
Excellence, then, is  
not an act, but a  
habit"*

Aristotle  
(384 BC - 322 BC)

# CLOSING COMMENTS

*"...they need the Education sector and the Scottish  
government to embrace and collaborate with the  
animation / VFX sector, to enable growth in the sector."*

Mortimer, J. (2018),

## BETTER COMMUNICATION

All participants from both the education and industrial sectors;  
indicated that they would welcome better communication with the other sector.

## FURTHER INFORMATION

# BEING BETTER INFORMED

- 1). You have contacts with fellow participants
- 2). Information on the local industry & education sector
- 3). Actionable points (CPD & follow-up)





**PROFESSIONALS**

**240+**

**WORKING IN  
THE SECTOR**

**DEVELOPING  
SERVICE  
INDUSTRY**

**+IP** ANIMATED  
CONTENT

**ANIMATION/VFX  
SECTOR VALUE**

**£20m** <sup>[2019]</sup>

\*BASED ON STUDIO MEMBERS' INCOME

[2008-2018]

**10  
YEAR**

**SECTOR GROWTH**

**UP TO:  
TAX RELIEF 25%**

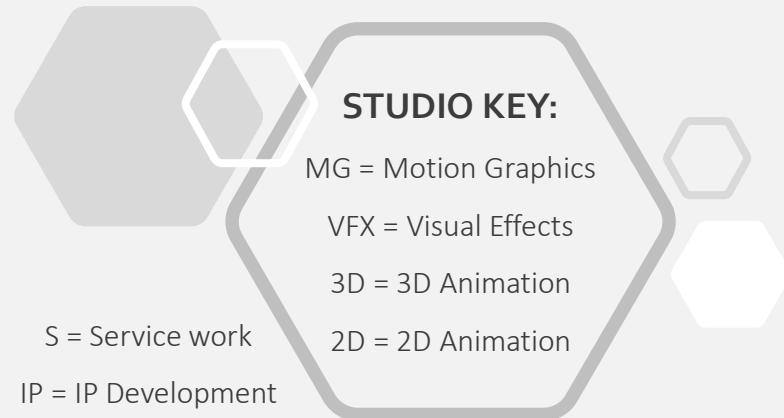


**ANIMATION  
SCOTLAND**

©2019 Animation Scotland

# ANIMATION STUDIO DIRECTORY

Information below is compiled from *Animation Scotland* members JAN 2020.

GLASGOW		EDINBURGH		STIRLING	
IP + S	Axis Studios <span style="float: right;">3D / VFX</span> [Co-founding Studio] <a href="http://www.axisstudiosgroup.com">www.axisstudiosgroup.com</a>	IP + S	Interference Pattern <span style="float: right;">3D / VFX</span> [Co-founding Studio] <a href="http://www.interferencepattern.com">www.interferencepattern.com</a>	IP + S	North Star <span style="float: right;">2D / 3D / VFX</span> [Co-founding Studio] *Website pending
	ISO Design <span style="float: right;">3D</span> <a href="http://www.isodesign.co.uk">www.isodesign.co.uk</a>	IP + S	Sellout Animation <span style="float: right;">2D</span> <a href="http://www.selloutanimation.com">www.selloutanimation.com</a>		Super Umami <span style="float: right;">2D / 3D</span> <a href="http://www.superumami.com">www.superumami.com</a>
S	Playdead <span style="float: right;">3D / MG</span> <a href="http://www.playdead.tv">www.playdead.tv</a>		Eyebolls <span style="float: right;">2D / MG</span> <a href="http://www.eyebolls.com">www.eyebolls.com</a>	 <p><b>STUDIO KEY:</b>                      MG = Motion Graphics                      VFX = Visual Effects                      3D = 3D Animation                      2D = 2D Animation                      S = Service work                      IP = IP Development</p>	
	Touzie Tyke <span style="float: right;">3D / MG</span> <a href="http://www.touzietyke.com">www.touzietyke.com</a>		2D Workshop <span style="float: right;">2D</span> <a href="http://www.the2dworkshop.com">www.the2dworkshop.com</a>		

# COURSE DIRECTORY

A compiled list of *animation / digital media / computer arts* courses in FE & HE Scotland.

GLASGOW	EDINBURGH	DUNDEE & FIFE
<p>City of Glasgow College HND 3D Computer Animation [SQA] HND Creative Animation [SQA] <a href="http://www.cityofglasgowcollege.ac.uk">www.cityofglasgowcollege.ac.uk</a></p> <p>FE</p>	<p>Edinburgh College HND 3D Computer Animation [SQA] <a href="http://www.edinburghcollege.ac.uk">www.edinburghcollege.ac.uk</a></p> <p>FE</p>	<p>Dundee &amp; Angus College HND 3D Computer Animation [SQA] <a href="http://www.dundeeandangus.ac.uk">www.dundeeandangus.ac.uk</a></p> <p>FE</p>
<p>Glasgow Caledonian University BSc (Hons) 3D Animation &amp; Visualisation <a href="http://www.gcu.ac.uk">www.gcu.ac.uk</a></p> <p>HE</p>	<p>Edinburgh College of Art BA (Hons) &amp; MFA Animation <a href="http://www.eca.ed.ac.uk">www.eca.ed.ac.uk</a></p> <p>HE</p>	<p>Fife College HND 3D Computer Animation [SQA] <a href="http://www.fifecollege.ac.uk">www.fifecollege.ac.uk</a></p> <p>FE</p>
<p>Glasgow School of Art MDes Animation <a href="http://www.gsa.ac.uk">www.gsa.ac.uk</a></p> <p>HE</p>	<p>Edinburgh Napier University BSc (Hons) Digital Media &amp; MA Motion Graphics <a href="http://www.napier.ac.uk">www.napier.ac.uk</a></p> <p>HE</p>	<p>Duncan of Jordanstone BDes (Hons) Animation &amp; MSc Animation VFX <a href="http://www.dundee.ac.uk">www.dundee.ac.uk</a></p> <p>HE</p>
<p>University of the West of Scotland BSc (Hons) Computer Animation Art <a href="http://www.uws.ac.uk">www.uws.ac.uk</a></p> <p>HE</p>	<p><b>COURSE KEY:</b> BA / BDes = (Focuses on the arts &amp; design) BSc = (Focuses on the technical)</p>	<p>Abertay University BA (Hons) Computer Arts <a href="http://www.abertay.ac.uk">www.abertay.ac.uk</a></p> <p>HE</p>

\*FE = Further Education / HE = Higher Education

# ANIMATION RESOURCES & EVENTS


## ONLINE RESOURCES (ANIMATION / VFX)


No.	Name	Focus	Cost	Link
1	AnimDojo	TV	£15 per month	<a href="http://www.animdojo.com">www.animdojo.com</a>
2	Animation Mentor	Feature	Course cost \$2,499 with an \$100 registration fee (\$19,000 for the full 18-month program)	<a href="http://www.animationmentor.com">www.animationmentor.com</a>
3	YouTube	Varied	Free or Monthly sub: £11.99	<a href="http://www.youtube.com">www.youtube.com</a>
4	AnimSchool	Feature	\$540 per month	<a href="http://www.animschool.com">www.animschool.com</a>
5	iAnimate.net	Feature, Creature, & Games Animation	Feature Animation; \$1,698 (for each 11 week workshop)	<a href="http://www.iAnimate.net">www.iAnimate.net</a>
6	Lynda.com	Varied	Basic: \$25 per month Premium \$37.50	<a href="http://www.lynda.com">www.lynda.com</a>

## HELPFUL LINKS FOR STUDENTS & LECTURERS

No.	Name	Link	Notes
1	Animation-Festivals: 299 ANIMATION FESTIVALS	<a href="http://www.animation-festivals.com">www.animation-festivals.com</a>	Event such as; the Move Summit (Feb), Scotland loves anime (Oct) & MAF (Nov)
2	11 Second Club	<a href="http://www.11secondclub.com">www.11secondclub.com</a>	Monthly animation competition, database of submissions & free rigs
3	Character Design Reference	<a href="http://www.characterdesignreferences.com">www.characterdesignreferences.com</a>	Monthly character design competition, visual library & interviews

# THANK YOU

 Jonathan (Jon) Mortimer

 [j.Mortimer@napier.ac.uk](mailto:j.Mortimer@napier.ac.uk)