



Code of Practice

For Visual Effects Companies

This Code of Practice has been developed by the UK Screen Association through consultation with its member companies from the UK Visual Effects (VFX) sector.

The Code is intended to reflect the existing good practices of employers in this sector and to recognise the shared standards to which they aspire.

The Code of Practice is written as a series of statements covering a variety of areas. As a stakeholder (client, employee¹ or supplier) the Code will help you understand how a VFX company belonging to the UK Screen Association should behave towards you. These commitments supplement the information contained in an individual company's contracts with its clients, employees and suppliers.

This Code will always be available in its most updated form at www.ukscreenassociation.co.uk , where a list of UK Screen's members can also be found.

1 General

- 1.1 The UK Visual Effects sector has a global reputation for quality, innovation and talent in its work for the film, television and commercials industries. As companies providing services in this sector we are committed to behaving fairly and responsibly towards our employees, clients and peers and to maintaining and building upon this reputation.
- 1.2 Our actions will always conform to relevant UK and EU law.
- 1.3 We recognise the global and structural challenges facing the UK VFX sector and will endeavour to work collaboratively with our peers and with other industry bodies to ensure that the UK remains an attractive location for VFX work. We believe that working together to promote sector growth is the most effective way to ensure job creation, investment in skills, infrastructure and R&D and a positive return to the UK economy.
- 1.4 We will work with the sector skills council to ensure that funding for skills is used in an effective and appropriate manner to ensure that employees and new entrants to the sector are continually developed to meet the demands of our rapidly changing sector.
- 1.5 We will continue to support the Government's tax relief programme for culturally British content/productions and will provide all assistance necessary to validate the integrity of claims.

2 Our Clients

- 2.1 We recognise that the security and confidentiality of the work we manage is of the utmost importance to our clients and business. We are committed to maintaining the highest level of integrity in the management of the work we create. We will always ensure any third party or employee who comes into contact with sensitive material will comply with the regulations on confidentiality, copyright, piracy, and theft. We establish, employ and continuously review our security procedures to ensure they are sufficient to the requirements of our clients.

- 2.2 Protection of our clients' IP is extremely important to us. We will ensure all material is sufficiently stored and data is backed up by vigorous data management procedures. All content stored will have the appropriate security in place, such as encryptions and passwords.
- 2.3 To protect our clients and the work we carry out for them, we will ensure that we have the necessary insurance policies in place such as Employer's Liability, General Liability and the necessary insurance that covers on-set activities.
- 2.4 We will endeavour at all times to maintain the high quality of work expected of the UK VFX sector. Although each company will follow its own research and development strategy, our overall aim as a sector is to continually improve upon the cutting edge VFX services provided to clients.
- 2.5 When planning a project we will work closely with our client to ensure that the level of innovation matches the needs of the project and provides the best creative outcome for the available budget. We will maintain an ongoing creative dialogue throughout the duration of the project to ensure that the client's vision is fully realised on budget and to deadline.
- 2.6 We will engage the appropriate talent to carry out each aspect of the work and ensure that that talent is properly supported.
- 2.7 During the project we will keep our clients informed at all times on progress of shots and on any necessary amends to shot delivery dates or costs that arise from agreed changes or additions to client requirements.
- 2.8 We recognise that some clients will spread work for a film or television project across a number of providers. If we are not the only VFX studio working on a project we will maintain a close relationship with all other VFX studios involved in order to ensure delivery of the best possible work across the project.
- 2.9 We will assist our clients in obtaining advice on working in the UK and on accessing any appropriate tax reliefs.

3 Our Employees

- 3.1 As employers we commit to abiding by the requirements of EU and UK Employment Law, Health and Safety legislation and all other relevant regulations.
- 3.2 We are committed to providing equal opportunities for all. We will not engage in any form of discrimination on the grounds of sex, pregnancy, maternity, colour, race, ethnic or national background, sexual orientation, gender reassignment, marital or civil partnership status, disability, political or religious beliefs or age.
- 3.3 We will support the creative industries' initiatives to encourage more diversity in the workplace.
- 3.4 We recognise that the project –based nature of our work will lead to periods of increased workload from time to time. For this reason it is common practice to ask employees to opt out of the maximum working week as per the provisions of the EU Working Time Regulations. However we will always respect an individual's decision on this matter and, where necessary, will monitor employees' working hours to ensure compliance with regulations.
- 3.5 Our sector is characterised by a culture of flexibility and trust in relation to hours worked. Where increased workloads require work at weekends employees are compensated fairly via each company's standard practices – eg payment, time off in lieu or other arrangements. We will always try to accommodate employees who are not able to work late or at weekends when required.
- 3.6 We seek to ensure a healthy work-life balance for the well being of our employees and the success of our creative output. We will work with our artists and producers to improve our processes and controls and to ensure good working practices.
- 3.7 We will aim to accommodate requests for flexible working wherever possible and practical.

- 3.8 We will monitor the employee's working environment and provide support for an individual employee's needs where appropriate by ensuring all employees have a desk assessment, providing them with the necessary equipment to make them comfortable at work and complying with health and safety legislation.
- 3.9 We will communicate with our employees on a frequent basis, utilising a mix of formal and informal tools and methods to ensure that information is disseminated in a timely and efficient manner, suited to our organisational structure and working practices.
- 3.10 We encourage and protect employees who report breaches of the terms of this code of practice and of any other obligation to which our business is required to adhere. We welcome full and frank feedback from our employees in the belief that this will ultimately help to create better businesses. We will not discriminate against employees who question our processes and approach but will use their feedback in a constructive manner.
- 3.11 Our employment model reflects the project-based nature of VFX work. We will not always be in control of, or have much advance warning of, our clients' plans and decisions. However we will always endeavour to manage expectations by keeping our employees informed of any changes in the project schedules for current and forthcoming work and to give sufficient notice of any impact this will have on an individual's contract.
- 3.12 Where quiet periods are anticipated between projects we will, wherever possible, work with our peers in the sector to identify opportunities, both locally and internationally, for employees whose contracts are coming to an end.
- 3.13 The continued development of talent is crucial to the success of our businesses and our sector. We will ensure that our employees are given opportunities to learn new skills and to carry out challenging work under the guidance of senior creative staff.
- 3.14 We do not expect, nor will we put pressure on, our new hires to break the terms of their contracts of employment with previous employers. In addition we will, where reasonable, respect the commitment that potential new hires may have to finishing their project/task with their current employer.

- 3.15 We will continue to build upon and improve our policies, ensuring they are clearly communicated, fair and applied consistently across the business. We ask that employees contribute to the development of our policies by inviting them to come forward with any questions, concerns or suggestions they may have.
- 3.16 Attracting and building on talent in the UK is a high priority, Where possible we will work closely with UK Screen, Creative Skillset and the Government on investment in VFX skills in the UK and on improvements to school and university courses.

4 Suppliers

- 4.1 We recognise the important contribution our suppliers make to the continuing success of our companies and of the UK VFX sector. We will treat suppliers fairly and with integrity at all times.
- 4.2 We will endeavour to provide timely payment as agreed at the time of contract and will have available a published terms of trade.
- 4.3 Where possible and practical we will work with, and provide feedback to, suppliers to help them improve their products and services. Where this collaboration involves the testing of proprietary software for third party vendors we will enter into a mutual non disclosure agreement as appropriate.
- 4.4 Respect for Intellectual Property rights is extremely important to us. We will ensure that all software used is legitimate and authorized and will not engage in, nor tolerate, the making or using of unauthorized software copies under any circumstances. We will comply with all license or purchase terms regulating the use of any software.
- 4.5 The rules governing software will be made clear to all employees as part of the induction process. Employees working under a freelance agreement and provide their own equipment will be expected to use only authorized software and we will take effective measures to verify compliance with these standards.

5 The Wider Environment

- 5.1 The UK VFX sector comprises companies both large and small. As such each company's approach to Corporate Social Responsibility will differ.
- 5.2 As a sector we aim to operate in the most energy efficient way possible. We recognise the environmental impact of our operations and take steps towards reducing our carbon footprint.
- 5.3 We will behave responsibly in disposal of electronic equipment and comply with The Waste Electronic and Electrical Equipment Regulations 2006.
- 5.4 Where possible we will support the work of local organisations and charities within the creative sector.

For further information on this Code of Practice please contact:

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ⁱ For avoidance of doubt, the term 'employee' is defined as an individual employed on fixed term or permanent contract and salaried by PAYE.