

catalyst

2026

BACHELOR OF ARTS / HE CERTIFICATE

Visual Effects, Video Game & Digital Arts

Create stunning effects, animations and artwork for film, games and immersive media while building your future-proof digital artist portfolio.

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Teaching Institution: Catalyst – Institute of Creative Arts and Technology

Final Award Title: Certificate of Higher Education (1 year) / Bachelor of Arts (Hons) (3 years)

Location: Berlin

Mode of study: Full time

Language of instruction: English

Awarding Institution: Plymouth Marjon University

Overview

Render yourself into greatness

Our **Visual Effects, Video Game & Digital Arts BA** is a hands-on, project-led course for creatives who want to design the impossible and build the unimaginable. You'll gain real-world experience in visual effects production, video game design, interactive arts and animation. Along the way, you'll build a deep understanding of the tools, techniques and workflows used across the VFX and animation industry, for film, television, games and new media.

This course is designed to support both technical skill-building and artistic growth. You'll explore a broad range of subjects including 2D and 3D animation, modelling, game environment and level design, the Unreal Engine 5 pipeline, and TouchDesigner. As you progress, you'll develop your own visual style, learn how to collaborate across departments, and gain the confidence to take creative risks. By the time you graduate, you'll be ready to lead a project from initial idea to polished, screen-ready work.

You can study this programme either as a full three-year BA degree or the first year only as a one-year HE Certificate.

By the end of the course, you'll have:

- A portfolio of original shots, sequences and collaborative projects
- Skills in 3D modelling, texturing, animation, lighting and rendering
- Mastery of industry-standard tools such as Nuke, Maya, Houdini and Unreal Engine
- The ability to take a project from concept art to final composite
- Experience working to professional briefs and production schedules
- A distinctive creative voice and confidence in your technical capabilities
- The mindset to keep evolving artistically and professionally

Learn in a space designed for creativity

The Visual Effects, Video Game & Digital Arts programme is part of our School of Film & Visual Media – alongside our School of Music & Sound, School of Acting and School of Creative Human Development. Our riverside campus is located at the Funkhaus. Berlin’s iconic broadcasting complex from the GDR era now brings together creatives from around the globe.

Our cutting-edge facilities are built with one thing in mind: maximising ‘hands-on’ access to doing what you love. Think of it as your very own technological playground. Inside, you’ll find dedicated VFX labs, a green screen studio, a cinema, and industry-spec editing and compositing suites. You’ll also have access to black box spaces and dedicated performance, acting and communal spaces.

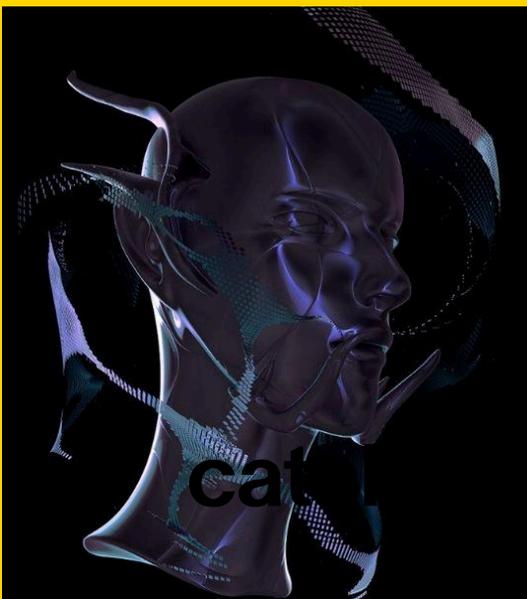
And because all our creative schools share the same building, your next collaborator could be just around the corner or down the hallway. You’ll be creating alongside actors rehearsing, filmmakers on set, musicians in session, writers workshopping, all under one same roof. Your work isn’t just shaped by what you do, but also by what’s happening around you.

“As a VFX student I was expecting to spend most of my time behind computers but the diversity of the programme is beyond what I expected and I am happy about that. In addition to that, I really enjoy the guest sessions that the programme offers. It gives us the opportunity to exchange with artists and have an outlook about what kind of career we are looking for.”

— Savina Janssen, designer and Visual Effects, Video Game & Digital Arts alumna

Come see it for yourself. Join a tour, attend an open day or visit our campus during a live showcase.

[[Click here to book a visit](#) →]



Define your artistic voice in Berlin

Berlin's VFX artists turn the impossible into the unforgettable. Many specialised studios including Rise, Karakter, Trixter, Lugundtrug and Celluloid VFX call Berlin their home. Electrifying death rays in Captain America, dragon-scorched cities in Game of Thrones and stunning environment design in hit video-games like God of War: Ragnarok were all conjured in Berlin. Our VFX scene caters for Hollywood, major streamers like Netflix, HBO and Apple and game designers like Ubisoft and Riotgames. The VFX industry in Berlin is blending artistry, precision and cutting-edge technology.

The culture spills beyond the studio walls and into the city's film sets, festivals and creative meet-ups. Berlin hosts some of the most cutting edge festivals and venues for digital arts, like CTM festival, LAS foundation and Dark Matter. Interactivity and installation are being intensely explored from many angles from a highly active digital art and mixed media scene. You might wander out of a gaming event or animation festival, and straight onto a street that doubles up for locations for Babylon Berlin or a Marvel blockbuster. Immersed in this energy, you'll find endless sparks for your own work.

Berlin's rich cinema history doesn't end there. Berlinale – aka the Berlin International Film Festival – is one of the most famous international film festivals and competitions in the world. It is one of Europe's "Big Three" – alongside the Venice Film Festival and Cannes Film Festival. Every year, Berlinale, along with the European Film Market and Berlinale Talents, takes over our city, with ten days of film premieres and thousands of industry experts.

“All the knowledge about myself and the pipeline I was able to gather makes me very confident going forward on the path as a creative person. And in the end, seeing people's enjoyment playing this small demo I made, made all the work worth it.”

– Leander Blaschke, VFX artist and Visual Effects, Video Game & Digital Arts alum



Learning by doing

Our learning method and philosophy

Why we teach this way

We believe the best way to learn digital assets and storytelling is through practice. That's why this course is built around practice-based learning. This is a progressive approach to education that replaces off-the-shelf learning with practical work, giving you insight into how the creative industries actually operate.

Ready to leave outdated learning methods behind?

→ Working on sustained projects helps you retain knowledge, turning it into usable skills. This gives you a deeper understanding of your craft and skills that are applicable to new situations.

Textbooks aren't your thing?

→ Instead of gaining knowledge passively, practice-based learning is an educational model that supports you in making connections through practical real-world tasks. Throughout our programme you'll apply your skills to meaningful work with clear outcomes.

Worried you won't have the necessary experience to start your career?

→ Practice-based learning allows you to gain professional experience from day one. In every project you'll work with real tools, serious briefs and collaborative workflows.

Do assignments feel like chores?

→ Our curriculum is based around challenges that give you creative ownership. This approach opens doors, keeping your studies in tune with your personal interests and developing vision.

Want to learn how to turn creative ideas into action?

→ Practice-based learning continuously pushes you out of your comfort zone, requiring you to take action. Our supported structure for experimenting, testing and refining your ideas, allows you to build confidence in your creative decision-making and practice.

Need to build a portfolio that speaks for you?

→ Leave with more than just finished work – leave with a body of finished projects that reflect who you are as an artist, how you've grown and where you're going. Your portfolio is your creative fingerprint.

We've got you every step of the way

At Catalyst, you're supported by a team of experienced professionals who bring real-world wisdom into the classroom. As VFX specialists, game designers and visual artists themselves, they understand the challenges and demands of the creative industry. They'll guide you through a balance of structured learning and open exploration – asking you tough questions, offering honest feedback and helping define your own unique voice as a filmmaker. One-to-one tutorials are an important part of your learning journey, giving you a chance to reflect on your progress, set goals that align with your creative process and strengthen your vision.

Our **technical team** is a key part of your day-to-day experience. They're here to make sure production tools and environments never hold you back creatively. They'll help you:

- Troubleshoot technical issues during workshops so class time stays productive
- Set up motion capture systems and green screen environments
- Test and refine workflows for production and post-production
- Plan and support student-organised shoots, screenings and events
- Service, upgrade and repair equipment across campus so you're always working with reliable tools
- Troubleshoot technical issues quickly so you can stay in flow

You'll work across a variety of outputs, software and production methods – developing your own style while learning how to adapt to different creative challenges. Together, our tutors and technicians create a responsive, artist-centred environment that allows you to experiment, evolve and move forward with confidence.



A future-proof creative toolkit

Developing your creative practice means more than learning how to model, animate or composite effects. It's about building a set of creative life skills that stay with you, long after you've left the render farm or editing suite. Alongside hands-on experience with industry-standard tools like Nuke, Maya, Houdini, TouchDesigner, Unreal Engine and motion capture systems, we'll help you develop the soft skills and mindset that help you grow sustainably as a visual storyteller. That includes self-direction, creative resilience, critical thinking and the ability to learn through iteration and reflection. These soft skills are some of the most valuable tools you'll gain while with us – transferable to any challenge or creative direction you decide to pursue.

Seismic technological shifts during this decade have redefined the visual effects and digital media industries. That's why our curriculum emphasises future-proof skills like self-motivation, problem-solving, collaboration and communication. This course doesn't just teach you how to create stunning visuals. It helps you shape your path, strengthen your identity as a creative professional and stay agile in a field that's constantly evolving.

Alongside your academic and creative development, Catalyst offers a range of support services to help you navigate challenges, build confidence and stay creatively focused:

- **One-to-one counselling and coaching** – confidential sessions with qualified professionals to support emotional wellbeing, anxiety, creative blocks, conflict resolution and life transitions
- **Flourishing Fortnights** – immersive two-week workshop series focused on topics like creative collaboration, healthy boundaries, communication and emotional self-awareness
- **Self-Development & Leadership Course** – an optional deep dive into how you perceive yourself, others and your creative role in the world
- **Practical wellbeing support** – help accessing medical resources, therapy referrals, diagnosis pathways and other essential life services
- **Everyday check-ins** – a wellbeing team that's visible, approachable and part of the day-to-day campus life

Your creative community

You'll join an international, multidisciplinary community of filmmakers, actors, musicians, visual storytellers and writers where collaboration is an essential element of our learning framework. You'll work with your classmates day to day, helping each other learn as well as sharing skills. Our campus is designed to encourage interdisciplinary experimentation. As your real-time generation skills and digital tool-kit grow, students from our School of Music & Sound, School of Acting and School of Creative Human Development will all be eager to collaborate with you, too.

Our campus brings together over 70 nationalities under one roof. That diversity of perspective helps shape your creative outlook and opens up new ways of working. Whether you're compositing a scene, animating a sequence or testing a virtual production workflow, you'll be part of a community that reflects the collaborative nature of the visual effects industry.

Core skills for an industry-ready CV

By the time you graduate, you'll be confident working across the full VFX pipeline, including:

- Concept development and visual storytelling
- 3D modelling, texturing, rigging and animation
- Lighting and rendering with industry-standard tools
- Compositing and visual integration
- Motion graphics and simulation effects
- On-set VFX supervision
- Post-production workflows and delivery for multiple platforms
- Narrative and visual storytelling design
- Storyboarding, shot composition, and timing
- Video game environment design and asset integration
- Video game mechanic basics and Unreal Engine Blueprints
- Creative installations and interactive environments
- Generative and real-time audiovisual artwork
- Coding for visual arts (Touch designer, Arduino, Python programming)
- Concept development and experimental storytelling

You'll also graduate with a portfolio that showcases your technical range, creative vision and readiness to work in the global VFX industry.



Course structure & learning outcomes

The Visual Effects, Video Game & Digital Arts programme unfolds over three years:

Year 1 is fast-paced, collaborative, and production-focused. You will complete multiple individual creative projects, gain on-set and post-production experience alongside music and acting school students, and deliver three major collaborative projects.

Year 2 shifts focus from quantity to quality, as we go deeper into the art of visual creations with workshops in mechanics and dynamics, visual effects supervising and digital compositing. Your approach will become much more reflective, deliberate and self-focused.

Year 3 merges your skills, creative voice and presentation skills. Your final year integrates what you have learnt so far and looks outward, focusing on the industry and specialisation you wish to progress into after graduation.

You can study this programme either as a full three-year BA degree or the first year only as a one-year HE Certificate.

Please note that the following curriculum is non-binding and subject to change.

Year 1 – HE Certificate

Semester One		Semester Two	
SYNC1: Create (20 CATS) SYNC2: Craft (20 CATS) SYNC3: Explore (20 CATS)		SYNC4: Shape (20 CATS) SYNC5: Form (20 CATS) SYNC6: Locate (20 CATS)	
Development			
3D Assets		3D Assets	
Post Production		Post Production	
Live Action		Practical Effects	
Storyboarding & Animation	Image Composition	Environment Design for Film & Game	Principles of generative art

Year 1

The course content in your first year will focus on:

- Creating and mixing elements in a final image by shooting practical effects and live action footage.
- Rapid production, tackling weekly and fortnightly briefs.
- Taking photos and references.
- Recording action on set and in a green screen studio
- Creating and animating 2D graphic elements.
- Composing matte paintings, sketching, and bringing 3D assets to life.

Workshops

Development

Your “home room” with your Advisor, guiding you through the modules, projects and assessments which make up the accredited degree. Examine and reflect upon your visual skills from a top-down perspective, including your collaboration, communication, organisation, preparation and professional skills.

Live Action, Post Production, Practical Effects, Storyboarding & Animation, 3D Assets, and Environment Design for Film & Game

Get you up to speed on the fundamentals of visual effects in practical, tools and techniques based workshops. You will not find these a deep dive on the history and theory of each subject; rather, they will get you running on any equipment, software and techniques needed to complete your projects, and open the door so you can see how deep each rabbit hole goes. Exploring those rabbit holes is the major content of the first year workshops.

Image Composition and Principles of Generative Art

Theoretical workshops that provide space for discovering work from all kinds of visual artists and artistic practices through the fundamentals of image composition. While growing analysis skills, we will integrate essential fundamentals such as the science of colour, light, movement, storytelling. This module will hold the keys to technical and creative workflows, focusing on industry standards as well as future perspectives and the evolution of tools, techniques and technologies.

Year Two – HE Diploma

Semester One	Semester Two
BIND1: Refine (20 CATS) VFXD1: Engineer (40 CATS)	BIND2: Venture (20 CATS) VFXD1: Compline (40 CATS)
Development	
3D Assets II	3D Assets II
Unreal Engine	Unreal Engine
Creative Coding	Creative Art Installation
Storyboarding & Animation	VFX Analysis & Reproduction

Year 2

The course content in your second year will focus on:

- Understanding how to manage a whole project as a visual effects supervisor, including creative and technical planning.
- Gaining an understanding of the world of motion; digital rendering tasks such as fluids, particles and smoke FX, as well as motion capture and camera projection.
- Exploring roles and specialisations within a team.
- Augmented reality, virtual reality and live painting.
- Industry-standard formatting and rendering practices.
- Set-ups, tools and techniques for physical environments such as live cinema, real time rendering, live visuals, performance, multi-camera, projection mapping and live streaming.
- Set-ups, tools and techniques for digital environments such as 2D, real time, generative visuals, coding languages and shaders.
- Deeper investigation into storytelling and visual narrative.
- Digital art languages and formats.
- How to keep up with technological evolution and future perspectives.

Workshops

Development

Your “home room” with your Advisor, guiding you through the modules, projects and assessments which make up the accredited degree. Examine and reflect upon your visual skills from a top-down perspective, including your collaboration, communication, organisation, preparation and professional skills.

3D Assets II and Unreal Engine

Expand on the first year’s 3D Assets workshops and provide a space for diving deeper into asset creation and their physics. With the introduction of tools such as Substance Painter, ZBrush, and more specialized software like FumeFX, this workshop addresses advanced workflows and techniques underlying the creation of dynamic effects in production. In addition to advanced compositing, particles, fluids, and materials, the workshop explores game environment design, focusing on the integration of assets within interactive, immersive spaces. You will also investigate cross-platform workflows, dynamic environments and foundational aspects of game design within the Unreal Engine ecosystem.

Build on first-year skills with advanced tools like Substance Painter, ZBrush and FumeFX. You’ll explore workflows for compositing, particles, fluids and materials, while diving into game environment design and asset integration. The workshops also cover cross-platform workflows, dynamic environments and the fundamentals of gameplay and narrative in Unreal Engine.

Creative Coding and Creative Art Installation

Tackle node programming within the context of the visual arts. You’ll primarily be using TouchDesigner, a node-based programming language (based on Python), that allows the creation of real-time audiovisual content and interactive multimedia environments. You’ll also learn how to make a generative artwork and acquire the skills necessary to write code correctly.

VFX Analysis & Reproduction

Learn to prepare and overview VFX during live action shooting and post-production. Alongside traditional workflows, these workshops integrate new areas such as previz and on set and virtual filmmaking. Through a semester-long project, we’ll emphasise visual effects creative and technical planning, DIT and set VFX supervising in various setups.

Storyboarding & Animation

Expanding your storytelling foundation, this workshop explores narrative structure, character acting and cinematic craft. With a focus on shot composition, timing and rhythm, you’ll learn how to stage action, integrate dialogue and use editing to enhance meaning. You’ll also compare how story arcs and beats unfold across film, animation and games.

Year Three - Bachelors Degree

Semester One		Semester Two	
PUSH1: Frame (20 CATS)	PUSH2 Invent (40 CATS)		PUSH3 Launch (20 CATS)
PUSH4: Process or PUSH5: Dissertation (40 CATS)			
Production			
Orientation			

Year 3

- Defining, revising, researching and planning your major artistic work of the year.
- Bringing a highly-finessed major piece of work that showcases your skills to life.
- Practising the pitching and proposal of concepts as well as the distribution process within the visual effects industry.
- Actively investigating and working towards your chosen specialisation.
- Multi-disciplinary collaboration with peers.
- Continuous refinement of production skills through workshops.
- In-depth study of narrative and more intricate aspects of how effective storytelling is formulated and the place of stories in visual culture.

Frame

Kick off your Major Project with focused workshops designed to shape and strengthen your ideas. Over several weeks you'll research, refine and plan your project while developing proposals and pitches for both peers and industry experts. Collaboration is key – you'll work closely with your supervisor and classmates to exchange feedback and solve problems. The result is a clear action plan and a solid foundation for the year ahead.

Invent

Take full creative lead during the production phase of your Major Project. Across Semester A and B, you'll develop, refine and finalise your work through collaboration, reworking and fine-tuning. Support comes through group consultations and one-to-one meetings, helping you problem-solve and adjust along the way. This is where your project takes shape and comes to life.

Launch

Take your completed project beyond the classroom and into the world. With consultation-based workshops, you'll receive mentorship and feedback as you plan its presentation and distribution. This is where your creative journey culminates in a public showcase of your work.

Process

Prepare yourself for the professional side of the VFX industry. Alongside industry experience, you'll build soft skills such as networking, self-marketing, portfolio presentation and client communication. You'll also collaborate with music artists and film students to produce a tailor-made music video. In the second half, workshops shift to one-on-one consultations with your supervisor to support your work and assessments.

Dissertation

Sessions supporting you in developing advanced research and critical thinking skills that will inform both your academic and professional journey in the VFX and creative industries. While you independently investigate a topic of personal interest through the writing of an 8,000-word dissertation, these workshops provide the tools, structure, and guidance needed to shape and refine your research practice.

Production and Orientation

Sharpen your VFX skills and get support in creating your best possible work for the Major Project. At the same time, it helps you map out your future creative practice and prepare for a professional career after graduation.

A Typical Week: Year 1, Semester A, Week 5

To give you an idea of what a typical week will look like for you, here is an example week from a previous first year, and what the students learned that week. Please note that this is not intended as a guide or your official timetable when joining this programme.

Development Workshop

- Review of Week 4 feedback
- Project check-ins, planning, brainstorming, and organizational support
- Sync 1: brainstorming, discussing the main idea, and developing a project plan

Live Action

- Understanding scene lighting and green screen techniques
- Exploring different types of lights and lighting setups
- Principles of color balance and white balance

3D Assets

- Lighting setup within Cinema 4D
- 3D Modeling Basics II: understanding form, modeling techniques, and UV unwrapping

Post-Production

- Video effects in Adobe Premiere
- Video transitions and editing workflows

Image Composition

- Principles of image composition
- Color theory and the application of color in visual design
- Tools and techniques for using color effectively in composition



How to Apply

Get to know us better

Virtual Open Days → Get a virtual overview of what we're all about, held over Zoom.

In-Person Open Day → Get a first-hand feel of our school and educational programmes.

Campus Tours → Come see our facilities and creative spaces at one of our regular tours.

Virtual Taster Workshops → Join a programme-specific info event or masterclass

Admissions Open Hours → Book your one-to-one application support on-demand.

Admissions Guidance

1. **Course fees & payment plans**
2. **Early Enrolment Bonus – save €3,000 off total tuition**
3. **Funding opportunities**
4. **Application deadlines & Visa requirements**
5. **How to apply**
6. **Contact us**

1. Course fees & payment plans

We believe creative education should be accessible, transparent and free from hidden costs. Our tuition plans are flexible – you decide to pay monthly, per semester, annually or in full with discounts. Extended payment options let you spread costs beyond your programme.

Plan type	Standard fees	With Early Enrolment Bonus	Payment Plan Duration	Notes
Per semester	€6,028	€5,528	3 years / 6 sem.	Annual enrolment fee €895
Annually	€11,693	€10,693	3 years	3% discount by paying each year upfront. Annual enrolment fee €895
Total tuition upfront	€33,272	€30,272	One-time	8% discount by paying total tuition upfront. Annual enrolment fee €895
12 instalments per year	€1,088	€1,005	3 years	Annual enrolment fee €895
Extended yearly	€9,541	€8,791	4 years	Payments continue 1 year after graduation. No enrolment fee for the fourth year.
Extended instalments	€858	€795	4 years	Payments continue 1 year after graduation. No enrolment fee for the fourth year.

Enrolment fee

This non-refundable fee of €895 per study year is due before the start of each academic year and secures your place. No enrolment fee is charged in the post-graduation year if you choose an Extended Payment Plan.

Extended payment plans

In addition to single or installment payment options, we offer Extended Payment Plans. This spreads tuition payments over an additional year, resulting in smaller monthly payments that continue for one year after graduation.

Enrolment confirmation & billing

- **Enrolment fee:** due within 14 days of receiving your offer.
- **Billing cycle:** tuition installments begin **1 July 2026** and are billed on the first of each month until your chosen plan ends.

2. Early enrolment bonus

Apply by our **priority deadline** to secure your place, save €3,000 off your total tuition (€1,000 per study year) and access visa support sooner.

- **Visa-required applicants:** apply by 28 February 2026

- **EU/visa-exempt or post-arrival applicants:** apply by 31 March 2026

3. Funding opportunities

As an accredited higher education provider, our students are eligible for a variety of national and international financial aid schemes. This includes the German state funding stream BAföG, which is open to citizens of Germany, EU countries and some non-EU citizens too. Depending on which country you are a citizen of, this may also open up funding from other programmes supporting further-education. **[Read more about the various funding opportunities on our website.](#)**

4. Application deadlines

Visa-required applicants

- Priority: 28 February 2026 (includes bonus & visa support)
- General: 30 April 2026 (subject to processing time and availability)

EU/visa-exempt or post-arrival applicants

- Priority: 31 March 2026 (includes bonus & guaranteed spot on preferred course)
- General: 5 June 2026 (granted on a rolling basis)
- Late: until 28 August 2026 (subject to availability)

Visa requirements

- **Visa-required:** If you require a visa before entering Germany (e.g. citizens of India, Brazil, Mexico, China, Turkey), you must apply at a German embassy before arrival. Our Visa Support Service (included in the enrolment fee) supports you with paperwork, appointments and timelines. Visa processing can take 3–6 months, so early application is essential.
- **Post-arrival visa:** If you're from a country that allows visa-free entry (e.g. USA, Canada, Japan, South Korea), you can enter Germany without a visa and apply for your student residence permit after arrival.
- **Visa-exempt (EU/EEA/Switzerland):** If you're a citizen of the EU, EEA or Switzerland, you don't need a visa or residence permit to study in Germany.

5. How to apply

Our application process is straightforward – just follow these steps:

1. **Check deadlines** – especially if you need a visa to enter Germany or financial support.
2. **Prepare your portfolio** – requirements vary by course, check our “How to apply” page.

3. **Submit your application** at catalyst-berlin.com/apply, including personal and educational details, a motivation statement, your portfolio and supporting documents such as transcripts or proof of language ability.
4. **Wait for our response** – we'll be in touch within around two weeks. Sometimes we'll ask for follow-up information or invite you for an interview. Keep an eye on your inbox.
5. **Confirm your place** – once you receive an offer letter, secure it by paying the enrollment fee within 14 days.
6. **Get ready for Berlin** – once your enrolment fee is paid, you're officially enrolled. Next you'll set up your payment plan, receive your welcome package and access preparation materials for your studies. We recommend finding accommodation as soon as you're sure that you're studying with us, and arriving one month before your classes begin.

Contact & resources

Reach out to our Admissions team by email at admissions@catalyst-berlin.com or book a call [here](#).

