

UNIVERSITY FOR THE CREATIVE ARTS

PROGRAMME SPECIFICATION FOR:

BA (HONS) GAMES DESIGN.¹

PROGRAMME SPECIFICATION [ACADEMIC YEAR 2020/21]

This Programme Specification is designed for prospective students, current students, academic staff and potential employers. It provides a concise summary of the main features of the programme and the intended learning outcomes that a typical student might reasonably be expected to achieve and demonstrate if he/she takes full advantage of the learning opportunities that are provided. More detailed information on the teaching, learning and assessment methods, learning outcomes and content of each unit can be found in the Unit Descriptors.

¹ Formerly known as BA (Hons) Computer Games Design

Section A – Material Course Information

Validating Body	University for the Creative Arts ²		
Teaching Body	University for the Creative Arts		
Final Award Title and Type	BA (Hons)		
Course Title	Games Design		
Course Location and Length	Campus: Rochester	Length: Full-time - 3 Years	
Mode of Study	Full-time	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Part-time
Period of Validation	2017/18 - 2021/22		
Name of Professional, Statutory or Regulatory Body	Not Applicable		
Type of Accreditation	Not Applicable		
Accreditation due for renewal	Not Applicable		
<p>Entry criteria and requirements³</p> <p>As the UK's highest-ranking creative arts university, we want to attract the best and most creative minds in the country – so we take a balanced approach to candidate assessment, taking both individual portfolios and exam results into account.</p> <p>That's why your portfolio is an especially important part of your application to study with us – and we can help. Our academics can offer you expert advice on how to showcase your creative work and build a portfolio that will make your application stand out.</p> <p>More advice on how to create an exceptional portfolio is also available here, along with specific portfolio requirements for this course.</p> <p>Along with your portfolio, the standard entry requirements** for this course are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 112 UCAS tariff points from accepted qualifications*, or • Pass at Foundation Diploma in Art & Design (Level 3 or 4), or • Distinction, Merit, Merit at BTEC Extended Diploma, or • Merit at UAL Extended Diploma, or • 112 UCAS tariff points from an accredited Access to Higher Education Diploma in appropriate subject. <p>And four GCSE passes at grade A*-C and/or grade 4-9 including English Language (or Functional Skills English/Key Skills Communication Level 2).</p> <p>Other relevant and equivalent level 3 UK and international qualifications are considered on an individual basis, and we encourage students from diverse educational backgrounds to apply.</p>			

² Regulated by the Office for Students

³ This should be the standard University Criteria unless otherwise approved by the Academic Board and include UCAS entry profile for undergraduate courses.

If your first language is not English, you will need an IELTS score of 6.0 or equivalent. If you require a visa to study in the UK, you will also need a minimum score of 5.5 in each individual component.

***To see the accepted QCF qualifications, visit: <http://uca.ac.uk/study/accepted-qualifications/>*

*** We occasionally make offers which are lower than the standard entry criteria, to students who have faced difficulties that have affected their performance and who were expected to achieve higher results. In these cases, a strong portfolio is especially helpful.*

Overall methods of assessment ⁴	Written exams:	Practical exams:	Coursework:
Stage 1	0%	0%	100%
Stage 2	0%	0%	100%
Stage 3	0%	0%	100%
Overall Learning & Teaching hours ⁵	Scheduled:	Independent:	Placement:
Stage 1	39.2%	60.8%	0%
Stage 2	470 hours	730 hours	0 hours
	36.7%	63.3%	0%
Stage 3	440 hours	760 hours	0 hours
	17.5%	82.5%	0%
	210 hours	990 hours	0 hours
General level of staff delivering the course ⁶	The University's current recruitment policy for Lecturers and Senior Lecturers states that they must have either an MA or equivalent professional practice in a relevant discipline or field. All lecturing staff are encouraged to work towards a teaching qualification or professional Recognition by the Higher Education Academy and this is a requirement for Senior Lecturers. Senior Lecturers are required to be professionally active or engaged in research in their discipline. All Lecturers and Senior Lecturers undertake scholarship in their disciplines. There are also Sessional Staff to link courses with professional practice and Technicians to provide technical support.		
Language of Study	English		
Subject/Qualification Benchmark Statement:			
Art and Design Computing			
Framework for Higher Education Qualifications (FHEQ)			

⁴ As generated by the most popular unit descriptors and calculated for the overall course stage data.

⁵ As generated by the most popular unit descriptors and calculated for the overall course stage data.

⁶ Include general information about the experience or status of the staff involved in delivering the course, for example Professor, Course Leader, Senior Lecturer

The course structure

The structure of all of the University's awards complies with the University's [Common Credit Framework](#). The Common Credit Framework includes information about the:

- Rules for progression between the stages of a course;
- Consequences of failure for reassessment, compensation and exit awards;
- Calculation and classification of awards;

Unit codes and titles	Level	Credit value	Elective/ Core	Most popular student choice of optional elective units or elective options in core units?
Year/Stage 1				
RGMD4001 Art and Design	4	30	Core	
RGMD4002 Animation	4	30	Core	
RGMD4003 Interaction	4	30	Core	
RGMD4004 Moving Image Culture: Understanding and Interpretation	4	30	Core	
Year/Stage 2				
RGMD5001 Games Design	5	30	Core	
RGMD5003 Game Production	5	60	Core	
RGMD5002 Gaming Culture	5	30	Core	
RGMD5004 Game Production (Study Abroad Option)	5	30	Elective	No
Study Abroad with Host Institution	5	60	Elective	No
Year/Stage 3				
RGMD6001 Final Major Project - Pre-Production	6	30	Core	
RGMD6002 Final Major Project	6	60	Core	
RGMD6003 Dissertation	6	30	Core	

Section B - Course Overview

BA (Hons) Games Design will allow you to apply your skill and creativity within the growing computer games industry and beyond. This course is biased towards indie development – we particularly value an entrepreneurial independent attitude and aim to challenge convention and inform the future of gaming.

There is no common definition of what constitutes an "indie game", however, indie games generally share certain characteristics. They are developed by individuals, small teams, or small independent companies. Indie game developers are generally not financially backed by video game publishers (who are risk-averse and prefer big-budget games) and usually have a small budget which they use creatively.

Being independent, indie developers do not have controlling interests or creative limitations and do not require publisher approval as mainstream game developers usually do. Furthermore, smaller team sizes increase individual involvement.

Small teams, unlimited scope, and no creative restrictions mean that indie games are known for innovation, creativity, and artistic experimentation.

We recognise that this side of the industry requires a broad skillset, individuals are likely to work small teams. This course focuses on indie game development, if you're interested in AAA games development consider our BA (Hons) Games Arts or BSc (Hons) Games Technology courses in Farnham.

Rochester is ideally located in the South East of England proximate to 48% of the UK games industry, we're 45 minutes from London Victoria through which the capital's indie games and technology start-ups can be accessed.

Computer games are sophisticated cultural, audio-visual products equivalent in their complexity and craft as film. They draw on creative disciplines such as art, design and music, and technical disciplines such as computer science and coding. The Rochester campus is home to a broad range of creative courses including Computer Animation Arts, Fashion, Photography, Theatre Design, Film & Performance – courses that are likely to be useful reference and an inspiration for your practice.

The UK computer games industry is the largest in Europe and growing at a significant pace. Computer games designers have opportunity for employment globally.

The University has excellent facilities dedicated to Computer Games with studios of high-end PCs with industry standard software, VR development, mobile/tablet development kits and games consoles. The course has access to film and animation facilities, including production cameras, workshops and digital editing studios. The course has access to shared resources including 3D workshops, laser-cutting and rapid prototyping, as well as photography and printmaking.

Distinctive features of the course:

- Focus on indie computer game development.
- Development of a broad range of skills from traditional drawing to technical specific to computer games.
- The opportunity to develop computer games entrepreneurially for other fields and disciplines beyond the creative arts. For example educational and therapeutic games, games for rehabilitation.
- The opportunity for study abroad during Year 2.
- Located in the South East of England proximate to 48% of the UK games industry.
- Excellent computer games studios with industry standard facilities.

Year 1

In the first year you'll explore fundamental indie game design processes, technical foundations of design and scripting as well as planning. Theoretical units will give you a critical and conceptual understanding of your discipline.

Year 2

In the second year you'll work individually and in a team developing your design and prototyping skills as well as approaches to entrepreneurial practice. You'll have the opportunity to study abroad at a partner institution. Theoretical units will continue.

Year 3

The third year will see you work as part of a team to produce a prototype game. You will write a practice-based dissertation.

Section C - Course Aims

- A1 To prepare you for a career as a computer games designer, typically focusing on indie game development.
- A2 To provide you with general and transferable creative and computer science skills, acquired through indie game design and development typically requiring less powerful hardware, and using third party engines with pre-build tools and pipelines.
- A3 To provide you with entrepreneurial skills that can be applied within the games and technology industries as well as beyond.
- A4 To experience working both individually and as part of a team to find solutions to complex problems.
- A5 To encourage speculation, research, critical judgement and fluency in subject debate as a means of informing your own practice and that of others.
- A6 To enable you to articulate and synthesise your knowledge and understanding, attributes and skills in effective ways in the context of technical practice, employment, further study, research and self-fulfilment.
- A7 To equip you with the industry knowledge and experience that support a range of career paths within the computer games and associated industries.

Section D - Course Outcomes

Upon successful completion of the course students are able to:

Knowledge

LO1 Articulate and synthesise your knowledge and understanding, attributes and skills in effective ways in the context of technical practice, employment, further study, research or self-fulfillment.

LO2 Demonstrate your industry knowledge and experience in support of a specific career path within indie computer games and associated industries.

Understanding

LO3 Demonstrate working both individually and as part of a team to find solutions to complex problems.

LO4 Exhibit speculation, research, critical judgement and fluency in subject debate as a means of informing your own practice and that of others.

Application

LO5 Produce a portfolio of work appropriate to a career as a computer games designer, typically focusing on indie game development typically requiring less powerful hardware, and using third party engines with pre-build tools and pipelines.

LO6 Apply general and transferable creative and computer science skills, acquired through indie game design and development.

LO7 Employ entrepreneurial skills that can be applied within the games and technology industries as well as beyond.

Section E - Learning, Teaching and Assessment

Learning and Teaching Strategy

BA (Hons) Games Design provides an inclusive learning environment employing a diverse range of teaching methods to support different learning styles including lectures, seminars, practical workshops, demonstrations, studio practice, online learning, critiques, formative assessments, group and individual tutorials, external visits, and guided and self-directed independent study.

The course provides an iterative learning experience through which students are introduced to, understanding, apply, and practice knowledge and skills within all areas of research, design and production for computer games. Students are encouraged to take a reflective approach to their own learning and are given opportunity to evaluate their own work and to negotiate their own direction in reference to their interests and aspiration.

The course team believes in the integration of theory and practice – theoretical content is delivered both within practical and contextual units allowing students to contextualise their practice and prepare them for employment and/ or postgraduate study.

The first year of the course teaches specific disciplinary and transferable skills – knowledge and experience of the tools and processes required to create computer games, study methods and approaches to critical thinking and contextual knowledge. This course focuses on AAA game development, we recognize that that this side of the industry requires individuals with a narrow/deep skillset who inevitably work in complimentary teams. To enable this the second year of the course encourages you to develop your own specialist approach to computer game production. As you progress through the three years of this degree course, study becomes increasingly self-directed, often group based, and in most instances student led.

Peer review and peer assessment are used alongside presentations to enable tutors to monitor students' understanding of learning outcomes and assessment requirements and hone presentation and critical skills.

Theoretical components are delivered both within practical and contextual studies units allowing students to contextualise their practice as part of preparation for employment and/or postgraduate study.

The course also replicates professional working conditions of team based projects. Team working simulates industry practices and develops the skills required to negotiate roles and responsibilities in order to evolve and communicate creative strategies. These experiences test the students' abilities to develop and employ appropriate creative methodologies, resolve conflicts and peer assess the operation of the team. Individuals contributing to a team project are expected to identify their personal contribution to the project for assessment.

The course benefits from its close proximity to Guildford, one of the main games industry hubs in the UK. Guest practitioners from industry come to deliver lectures or teach on specific projects bringing with them contemporary and current approaches to their disciplines and a critical external perspective. Projects are updated annually to embrace contemporary trends, industry development, new ideas and methods of delivery.

Assessment Strategy

Assessment methods adopted by the course are consistent with the University's Assessment Policy.

Considerable use is made of portfolio assessment in which individual and group work for any unit can be combined, always with a written critical evaluation which fosters reflective learning, reflective practice and links between theory and practice.

This course uses both formative and summative assessment recognizing that both are critical but fulfil fundamentally different purposes:

Formative assessment is part of the learning process and provides constructive feedback to the learner; which allows students to improve their quality of work. This feedback can come from tutors or peers, it can be formal or informal.

Summative assessment is the process of evaluating learning at the conclusion of a unit of study. Summative assessment for Computer Games requires the submission of a portfolio or essay which is then reviewed by tutors with feedback given against assessment criteria in writing (and additionally verbally)

Some units require group work, for assessment students are required to identify their individual contribution to the outcome, and through written evaluation comment on their individual and group role in reference to the assessment requirements (this process is supported through tutorials and workshops).

On many assignments there is scope for negotiated briefs so that students' particular interests and favoured specialisms can be accommodated. This increases engagement and motivation and enables the course to meet a range of future career aspirations.

Emphasis in the assessment strategy is placed on the developing knowledge and understanding of the contexts for Computer Games, the ability to develop imaginative and speculative approaches to work, to employ intellectual rigour in the research and analysis of projects. To proficiently employ appropriate software skills, to creatively engage with a variety of conceptual, technical and aesthetic challenges, to work flexibly in a variety of contexts and to demonstrate a developing independent approach to learning.

The assessment strategy promotes the demonstration of the skills and abilities required for progression to professional work after university and the expected benchmark characteristics of a university award in the discipline. In particular, independent learning with an advanced understanding of creative, critical and research methodologies, sophisticated application of software, synthesis of cultural, technical and conceptual skills, advanced communication, critical reflection and intellectual rigour. All of which prepare graduates for professional practice in the games industry.

Section F - Enhancing the Quality of Learning and Teaching

The course is subject to the University's rigorous quality assurance procedures which involve subject specialist and internal peer review of the course at periodic intervals, normally of 5 years. This process ensures that the course engages with the applicable national Subject Benchmarks and references the Framework for Higher Education Qualifications.

All courses are monitored on an annual basis where consideration is given to:

- External Examiner's Reports
- Key statistics including data on retention and achievement
- Results of the Student Satisfaction Surveys
- Feedback from Student Course Representative