MA Computer Games: Art and Design

Programme Specification

Awarding Institution:
University of London (Interim Exit Awards made by Goldsmiths' College)
Teaching Institution: Goldsmiths, University of London
Name of Final Award and Programme Title: MA Computer Games: Art and Design
Name of Interim Exit Award(s):
Postgraduate Certificate in Computer Games: Art and Design,
Postgraduate Diploma in Computer Games: Art and Design
Duration of Programme: 1 year full-time or 2 years part-time
UCAS Code(s): Not applicable
HECoS Code(s): (101268) Computer Games Design
QAA Benchmark Group: Computing
FHEQ Level of Award: Level 7
Programme accredited by: Not applicable
Date Programme Specification last updated/approved: December 2020
Home Department: Computing
Department(s) which will also be involved in teaching part of the programme:
Not applicable

Programme overview

This ground-breaking MA teaches the knowledge and skills in demand by the computer games and entertainment industries, with an emphasis on game design, art and animation. Students can work with industrial partners, learn the fundamentals of computer programming, and gain understanding of business models and entrepreneurship.

The computer games and interactive entertainment business is a fast-growing multi-billion-dollar worldwide business, with games platforms from handhelds and mobiles including iPhones, iPads and Android phones, through consoles such as the Playstation 4, Xbox One and Nintento Wii U, to PCs and massively-multiplayer online games involving tens of thousands of people.

This MA will produce graduates who are well-positioned to have a career in this exciting worldwide industry, meeting the strong demand for graduate computer games designers and artists in the UK and abroad. Potential employers include EA, Ubisoft, Sony SCEE,

Creative Assembly, Microsoft, Cinesite, Framestore, and many others. The influence of computer games is spreading to other digital industries, with gamification and games-based learning, social machines and interactive visualisation of scientific and financial data all exploiting techniques from computer games, and all fields where graduates from this MA could make their mark.

What you will study

The programme is delivered by a mix of professionals from the games and effects industries and from the research world. The skills you will learn will have a focus on Games Design, Art and Animation in addition to gaining the fundamentals of computer programming, entrepreneurship / business and Practice. We work closely with industry leaders to shape the course content and to offer industry placements

Programme entry requirements

A BA or BSc Degree at 2.2 level or above. The BSc or BA can be from a wide range of subjects including Art and Design. Outstanding practitioners or individuals with strong commercial experience may be considered.

Non-native English students should normally have a minimum IELTS score of 6.5 or equivalent.

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Aims of the programme

This programme aims to produce graduates who are autonomous, creative and reflective games art and design practitioners, and who also have strong technical skills and basic hands-on understanding of programming and tools to underpin those creative skills and energies.

- Knowledge of computing technologies across a range of specialist topics in computer games art and design, both in terms of the latest research advances and industry standards.
- The ability to design and implement small and large-scale games, by using existing specialised software solutions or by working with the MSc Games and Entertainment programming students implementing their own games.
- Strong transferable skills, in particular the ability to work independently and in groups and to reflectively evaluate their own work.

What you will be expected to achieve

Students who successfully complete the Postgraduate Certificate Computer Games Art and Design or Postgraduate Diploma Computer Games Art and Design will demonstrate:

Knowledge and understanding

Code	Learning outcome	Taught by the following module(s)
A1	Proficiency to operate as a games designer and practitioner in the Computer Games and Serious Games industries, with associated programming, technical and pipeline management tools.	Game Design and Games Analytics. Introduction to Programming for Games. Introduction to Modelling and Animation.
A2	Competency in Art and Animation to work in 3D or 2D on assets and data sets, both small and large- scale projects, with associated programming, technical and pipeline management tools to underpin their creative skills.	Introduction to Modelling and Animation. Advanced Modelling and Animation. Introduction to Programming for Games.
A3	The ability to operate as a manager and project planner in the Computer Games and Special effects industries.	Business and Practice. Advanced Modelling and Animation.
A4	The ability to make objective business decisions based on commercial criteria in commercial situations working in a corporate or mid-range companies.	Business and Practice.
A5	Knowledge and skills to form an early stage start- up company, working with commercial clients and / or investors.	Business and Practice.
A6	A broad cultural understanding of commercial art in games and broader underlying cultural heritage and new	Business and Practice.

Code	Learning outcome	Taught by the following module(s)
	directions and trends including hardware and user interfaces.	
A7	Sufficient management skills to manage and steer a small creative team and with core skills to then develop into a Senior Producer and eventually a Creative Director.	Business and Practice. Advanced Modelling and Animation.

Cognitive and thinking skills

Code	Learning outcome	Taught by the following module(s)
B1	Application of advanced skills and research-led specialist knowledge in the design of software and data analyses; academic writing and presentation skills.	This will be taught throughout the programme
B2	The ability to critically analyse computer games in commercial, artistic and creative contexts.	Business and Practice.
B3	Application of advanced skills and research-led specialist knowledge in the design of software and data analyses; academic writing and presentation skills.	This will be taught throughout the programme

Subject specific skills and professional behaviours and attitudes

Code	Learning outcome	Taught by the following module(s)
C1	The ability to research and apply state of the art technologies independently and in cooperation in the context of concrete problems related to scalable game design problems (online and single player).	This will be taught throughout the programme
C2	The ability to design and program advanced computer software and products including novel hardware devices, including VR platforms.	Introduction to Programming for Games Game Design and Games Analytics.

Transferable skills

Code	Learning outcome	Taught by the following module(s)
D1	The ability to communicate effectively, both in writing and in presentations to an audience	Business and Practice
D2	The capacity to be highly creative Games Designers and Artists with an ability to think innovatively and to be able to reflect on and evaluate their work.	This will be taught throughout the programme
D3	The ability to work effectively in groups.	Business and Practice. Advanced Modelling and Animation.
D4	Advanced activity planning, and exercise personal responsibility in their work.	Business and Practice. Advanced Modelling and Animation.

In addition to the learning outcomes above, students who successfully complete the MA Computer games Art and Design will be able to:

Knowledge and understanding

Code	Learning outcome	Taught by the following module(s)
A1	Apply a deep understanding of cutting edge technologies in the creation of a substantial Games Project or Research Topic or on-site placement at a Computer Games company.	Advanced Modelling and Animation. Games Design and Analytics. Final Project or by Industry Placement.

Cognitive and thinking skills

Code	Learning outcome	Taught by the following module(s)
B1	Evaluate and debate cultural themes and technical dimensions in the historical context of art, computer games and the wider technical environment and trends	Final Project

Subject specific skills and professional behaviours and attitudes

Code	Learning outcome	Taught by the following module(s)
C1	Students will execute a significant piece of original professional standard design, animation and modelling work.	Games Design and Analytics. Advanced Modelling and Animation.

Code	Learning outcome	Taught by the following module(s)
		Final Project or by Industry Placements. Aided by review by industry externals contact and review of work during MSc and MA Games external speaker lectures series visits, when students meet professionals.

Transferable skills

Code	Learning outcome	Taught by the following module(s)
D1	Have excellent critical and analytical skills, be independent and creative workers and learners.	Advanced Modelling and Animation. Games Design and Analytics. Final project

How you will learn

The Department of Computing is committed to a diverse and stimulating range of learning and teaching methods that ensure the programme outcomes are addressed rigorously and effectively.

The course will be taught by a number of methods including a minimum of four one-hour weekly lectures, plus four weekly supervised two-hour lab sessions for development work, and “one to one” tutorials. In addition, MA Games students will attend a weekly external speaker programme with the MSc Games and PhD Students. Previous speakers include senior people from Creative Assembly, Swvre, Supermassive, Rebellion, Geomerics, Radiant Worlds and many more. Students have opportunity to meet the speakers over coffee after the talks and make useful contacts.

The use of the MSc and MA Games Lab in Hatcham House will be an important part of the MA Games Students learning experience where the students will work together on small and large group projects (including Games Hacks such as the Annual UKIE Games Hack and The Global Games Jam Hack which have occurred in the games lab), and from our experience in previous years, useful “peer to peer” learning also occurs. Students will be encouraged to attend wider Goldsmiths lectures including the Whitehead Lectures and the Human Interactive Conference.

How you will be assessed

The Department is committed to providing diverse types of assessment. Our methods of assessment are designed to reflect research and commercial activities and to encourage independent creative thinking and working mixed with collaborative work. Students will be required to present their work in a number of different ways including game play demos with associate code / analytics data, reports and short management reports, oral presentations and software delivery.

Each module in the programme will have its own assignments, reflecting to the nature of the module. In addition to modular assignments, students will have a major final project in the summer term, which should build on what students have learnt throughout the programme. The final project is an opportunity for students to work independently on a large project at a research level or work externally on-site at a company on a placement (which includes delivery of a Report).

In collaborative assignment work, particular care must be taken by students to describe clearly and precisely the nature of their contributions, and the contributions of their group collaborators. This must be delivered as part of students' assignment written reports and/or evaluation documentation, as required in the documentation brief.

Final projects will be assessed based on the submission of a final report and a presentation in a viva. Guidance on the structure and writing of the report will be given in the module handbook. Projects will be marked by a panel composed of two members of academic staff.

Students who are unable to submit an assessment on time due to illness or other unavoidable circumstances, must provide documentary evidence to their personal tutor in order to be allowed a late submission. Evidence must also be supplied for students to apply for consideration of mitigating circumstances in assessment.

Marking criteria

Mark	Descriptor	Specific Marking Criteria
80-100%	Distinction (Outstanding/ Exceptional)	Represents a demonstration of exceptional understanding, insight and achievement of the aspects described in the criteria for a distinction grade.
70-79%	Distinction	Demonstration of excellence in understanding based on a thorough graphs of relevant concepts, methodology and content; display of skill in applying and interpreting complex material; organization of material at a high level of competence. Students should be able to demonstrate the

Mark	Descriptor	Specific Marking Criteria
		ability to work independently to research and implement and in some cases extend state-of-the- art technologies.
60-69%	Merit	Demonstration of a deep level of understanding based on a competent grasp of relevant concepts, methodology and content; display of skill in applying interpreting complex material; organization of material at a high level of competence. Students should be able to demonstrate the ability to work independently to research and implement state-of-the-art technologies.
50-59%	Pass	Demonstration of a sound level of understanding based on a competent grasp of relevant concepts, methodology and content; display of skill in organizing, discussing and applying complex material. Students should be able to implement state-of-the-art technologies under guidance.
30-49%	Fail	Represents an overall failure to achieve the appropriate learning outcomes. A mark at this level is given to work which may have some positive features, but is not at Masters standard: for example by lacking structure, having a poor-quality line of argument, or does not demonstrate sufficient application
10-29%	Bad fail	Represents a significant overall failure to achieve the appropriate learning outcomes at Masters standard.
1-9%	Very bad fail	A submission that does not attempt to address the module's specified learning outcomes. It will be considered a non-valid attempt and the module must be re-sat.
0%	Non submission or plagiarised	Work was not submitted or it was plagiarised.

How the programme is structured

This MA programme addresses the pressing need for a high quality postgraduate degree serving the computer games and entertainment industries. This programme gives students professional-level games design, art and animation skills, as well as exposure to the fundamentals of computer programming, development tools, pipelines and entrepreneurship / business skills. The programme uses and extends our close relationship with the games and entertainment industries.

In addition, the programme encourages the development of the students' personal creativity in designing and building their own games as part of lab work and assignments, enabling them to build a strong personal portfolio.

The computer games and interactive entertainment business is a fast-growing multi-billion-dollar worldwide business, with varying games platforms from handhelds and mobiles including iPhones, iPads and Android phones, through consoles such as the Playstation 4, Xbox One, to PCs and massively- multiplayer online games involving tens of thousands of people. In addition, since 2014 we are seeing a renewal of growth activity around virtual reality and games with Occulus Rift and SONY Project Morpheus and also the novel use of robotics in games and the creative industries.

This MA will produce graduates who are well positioned to have a career in this exciting worldwide industry, meeting the strong demand for graduate computer games designers and artists in the UK and abroad.

Potential employers include EA, Ubisoft, Sony SCEE, Zynga, Boss Alien, Mind Candy, Creative Assembly, Microsoft, Cinesite, Framestore and many others.

The influence of computer games is spreading to other digital industries (including advertising), with gamification and games- based learning, location-based games, social machines and interactive visualisation of scientific and financial data all exploiting techniques from computer games, and all are fields where graduates from this MA could make their mark. Additionally, the Intelligent Games and Games Intelligence Doctoral Training Centre offers a chance for suitable students to perform independent research in this area, broadening and deepening their knowledge and skills.

Full-time mode

Academic year of study 1

Module Title	Module Code	Credits	Level	Module Status	Term
Introduction to Modelling and Animation	IS74021A	15	7	Compulsory	1
Business and Practice	IS71025B	15	7	Compulsory	1
Introduction to Programming for Games	IS71030B	15	7	Compulsory	1
Game Design and Games Analytics	IS74022A	15	7	Compulsory	2
Advanced Modelling and Animation	IS74023C	15	7	Compulsory	2

Module Title	Module Code	Credits	Level	Module Status	Term
Optional modules to the value of 45 CATS (from a list annually approved by the Department)	Various	45	7	Optional	1,2
Computer Games Final Project (Individual or Shared Final Project with MSc Computer Games Programming Students (with individual Reporting and assessment) or Industry Placement (under the existing MSc Games industry Placement Scheme)	IS74019B	60	7	Compulsory	3

Part-time mode

Academic year of study 1

Module Title	Module Code	Credits	Level	Module Status	Term
Introduction to Programming for Games	IS71030B	15	7	Compulsory	1
Introduction to Modelling and Animation	IS74021A	15	7	Compulsory	1
Advanced Modelling and Animation	IS74023C	15	7	Compulsory	2
Game Design and Games Analytics	IS74022A	15	7	Compulsory	2

Academic year of study 2

Module Title	Module Code	Credits	Level	Module Status	Term
Business and Practice	IS71025B	15	7	Compulsory	1
Optional modules to the value of 45 CATS (from a list annually approved by the Department)	Various	45	7	Optional	1,2
Computer Games Final Project (Individual or Shared	IS74019B	60	7	Compulsory	3

Module Title	Module Code	Credits	Level	Module Status	Term
Final Project with MSc Computer Games Programming Students (with individual Reporting and assessment) or Industry Placement (under the existing MSc Games industry Placement					

A different module allocation for part-time students can be agreed, if necessary.

Academic support

Support for learning and wellbeing is provided in a number of ways by departments and College support services who work collaboratively to ensure students get the right help to reach their best potential both academically and personally.

All students are allocated a Personal Tutor (one in each department for joint programmes) who has overall responsibility for their individual progress and welfare. Personal Tutors meet with their student at least twice a year either face-to-face, as part of a group and/or electronically. The first meeting normally takes place within the first few weeks of the autumn term. Personal Tutors are also available to students throughout the year of study. These meetings aim to discuss progress on modules, discussion of the academic discipline and reports from previous years if available (for continuing students). This provides an opportunity for progress, attendance and assessment marks to be reviewed and an informed discussion to take place about how to strengthen individual learning and success.

All students are also allocated a Senior Tutor to enable them to speak to an experienced academic member of staff about any issues which are negatively impacting their academic study and which are beyond the normal scope of issues handled by Programme Convenors and Personal Tutors.

Students are provided with information about learning resources, the Library and information available on Learn.gold (VLE) so that they have access to department/ programme handbooks, programme information and support related information and guidance.

Taught sessions and lectures provide overviews of themes, which students are encouraged to complement with intensive reading for presentation and discussion with peers at seminars. Assessments build on lectures and seminars so students are expected to attend

all taught sessions to build knowledge and their own understanding of their chosen discipline.

All assessed work is accompanied by some form of feedback to ensure that students' work is on the right track. It may come in a variety of forms ranging from written comments on a marked essay to oral and written feedback on developing projects and practice as they attend workshops.

Students may be referred to specialist student services by department staff or they may access support services independently. Information about support services is provided on the Goldsmiths website and for new students through new starter information and induction/Welcome Week. Any support recommendations that are made are agreed with the student and communicated to the department so that adjustments to learning and teaching are able to be implemented at a department level and students can be reassured that arrangements are in place. Opportunities are provided for students to review their support arrangements should their circumstances change. The Disability and Wellbeing Services maintain caseloads of students and provide on-going support.

The Careers Service provides central support for skills enhancement, running The Gold Award scheme and other co-curricular activities that are accredited via the Higher Education Achievement Report (HEAR).

The Academic Skills Centre works with academic departments offering bespoke academic literacy sessions. It also provides a programme of academic skills workshops and one-to-one provision for students throughout the year.

Links with employers, placement opportunities and career prospects

The existing MSc Computer Games and Entertainment Course has had a very strong recruitment record for students finishing the course, with nearly all students achieving full-time employment within 3 months of leaving. Existing employers of previous MSc Games and Entertainment Students include SONY SCEE, Supermassive, SEGA Creative Assembly, Sports Interactive, GamesLoft, Rebellion, WeRInteractive, Frontier and GameSys. This has been greatly aided by the Summer Term placement scheme we organise where students work onsite at companies for an entire term.

The MA Computer Games: Art and Design course is expected to emulate this and our existing contacts at companies to lead to jobs for students following completion of the course. Interestingly, our existing contacts at employers (including Ubisoft, Creative Assembly and Supermassive) have been regularly asking if Goldsmiths will be providing MA

Art and Design Students. Moreover, previous MSc Games and Entertainment students have used their entrepreneurial skills gained on the course to startup companies and gain development contracts and investment. Our programme opens up multiple career options including:

- Computer Games Designer for casual games development (Mobile, Tablet, PC). Level Designer for casual games development (Mobile, Tablet, PC).
- Computer Games Designer for Console Games Development (including Xbox One, Playstation4).
- Level Designer for Computer Games Designer for Console Games Development (including Xbox One, Playstation4) 2D and 3D Modeller for The Computer Games Industry.
- 2D and 3D Modeller for Film and TV Special Effects Industry. Junior Programmer in the Games Industry.
- Junior Producer in a Games Development Company, leading to senior management roles. Creative Lead at robotics development company for entertainment industry.
- Computer Games Designer for the Serious Games and Gamification Sectors. Creative Games and Interactive Technical Lead in an Advertising Agency. Creative Director Role in small or medium company.

Students might also develop their independent research questions, which could lead to postgraduate research, for example at the Intelligent Games and Game Intelligence Doctoral Training Centre.

The requirements of a Goldsmiths degree

All taught postgraduate degrees have a minimum total value of 180 credits and involve one calendar year of full-time study. Some programmes may extend over more than one calendar year and, when this is the case, they have a higher total credit value. Programmes are composed of individual modules, each of which has its own credit value. Part-time students normally take modules to the value of 90 credits each year. If a programme has a part-time pathway, the structure will be set out in the section “How the programme is structured” above. Normally, all modules are at level 7 of the Framework for Higher Education Qualifications.

More detailed information about the structure and requirements of a Goldsmiths degree is provided in the Goldsmiths Qualifications and Credit Framework.

Modules

Modules are defined as:

- “Optional” – which can be chosen from a group of modules
- “Compulsory” – which must be taken as part of the degree

Progression

Some programmes may require students to pass specific modules prior to completion of the dissertation/major project (or equivalent). Additionally, where a programme of study extends beyond one calendar year, students may be required to pass specific modules in their first year of study before progressing to the second year. Where this is the case, these requirements will be set out in this Programme Specification.

Award of the degree

In order to graduate, students must successfully complete all modules specified for the programme, as set out within the section “How the programme is structured” above.

Classification

Final degree classification is calculated on the basis of a student’s mean average mark (based on credit value) across all modules on the programme.

Masters degrees are awarded with the following classifications:

Distinction – 70%+
Merit – 60-69%
Pass – 50-59%

More detail on the calculation of the final classification is on our website.

Interim exit awards

Some programmes incorporate interim exit points of Postgraduate Certificate and/or Postgraduate Diploma, which may be awarded on the successful completion of modules to the minimum value of 60 credits or 120 credits respectively. The awards are made without classification.

When these awards are incorporated within the programme, the relevant learning outcomes and module requirements will be set out within the “What you will be expected to achieve” section above.

The above information is intended as a guide, with more detailed information available in the Goldsmiths Academic Manual.

Programme-specific rules and facts

General programme costs

In addition to your tuition fees, you will be responsible for meeting standard costs associated with your study. Find out more information at gold.ac.uk/programme-costs.

Specific programme costs

Not applicable.

How teaching quality will be monitored

Goldsmiths employs a number of methods to ensure and enhance the quality of learning and teaching on its programmes.

Programmes and modules are formally approved against national standards and are monitored throughout the year, such as in departmental committees, a variety of student feedback mechanisms and through the completion of module evaluation questionnaires. Every programme has at least one External Examiner who reviews comments annually on the standards of awards and student achievement. External Examiner(s) attend Boards of Examiners meetings and submit an annual written report.

Modules, programmes and/or departments are also subject to annual and periodic review internally, as well as periodic external scrutiny.

Quality assurance processes aim to ensure Goldsmiths’ academic provision remains current, that the procedures to maintain the standards of the awards are working effectively and the quality of the learning opportunities and information provided to students and applicants is appropriate.

Detailed information on all these procedures are published on the Quality Office web pages.