

# **MA Games Design**

Programme Specification 2020/21

<b>Awarding Body</b>	University of the Arts London
<b>College</b>	London College of Communication
<b>School</b>	University of the Arts London
<b>Programme</b>	Moving Image and Digital Arts (L060)
<b>FHEQ Level</b>	Level 7 Masters
<b>Course Credits</b>	180
<b>Mode</b>	Full Time
<b>Duration of Course</b>	1 year
<b>Valid From</b>	September 1st 2020
<b>Course Entry Requirements</b>	<p>An applicant will normally be considered for admission if they have achieved an educational level equivalent to an honours degree in either games design, animation, illustration, visual communication or graphic design or closely related subject, and present a portfolio of image-led work and project proposal.</p> <p>The course aims to appeal to art and design graduates who are interested in expanding their experience by investigating emerging areas of games design practice. However, we will consider applicants who have graduated from other related disciplines, or who have relevant industry experience.</p> <p>Students applying to this course will be expected to demonstrate a specific interest in this area of study and should have a commitment to engaging with games design.</p> <p><b>Coding experience</b></p> <p>Entry onto the course requires that you have some experience of coding. This maybe HTML/CSS/JavaScript or others such as actionscript, Java, C++ etc. Your level of experience can be quite low, as we will upskill applicants where needed, but you need to be comfortable with learning code and understand key concepts such as 'for loops' and 'conditional if' statements.</p>

This level of experience would have been gained by studying an undergraduate multimedia course in art and design, pre-university qualifications in computer science, multimedia and/or web authoring or advanced self-taught practice of coding through free services such as codecademy.com.

**Educational level may be demonstrated by:**

- Honours degree (named above);
- Possession of equivalent qualifications;
- Prior experiential learning, the outcome of which can be demonstrated to be equivalent to formal qualifications otherwise required;
- Or a combination of formal qualifications and experiential learning which, taken together, can be demonstrated to be equivalent to formal qualifications otherwise required.

**APEL (Accreditation of Prior Learning)**

Applicants who do not meet these course entry requirements may still be considered in exceptional cases. The course team will consider each application that demonstrates additional strengths and alternative evidence. This might, for example, be demonstrated by:

- Related academic or work experience
- The quality of the personal statement
- A strong academic or other professional reference
- OR a combination of these factors

Each application will be considered on its own merit but we cannot guarantee an offer in each case.

**Language requirements**

All classes are conducted in English. If English is not your first language, we strongly recommend you let us know your English language test score in your application. If you have booked a test or are awaiting your results, please indicate this in your application. When asked to upload a CV

	<p>as part of your application, please include any information about your English test score.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• IELTS 6.5 (or equivalent) is required, with a minimum of 5.5 in each of the four skills.</li> <li>• If your first language is not English, you can check you have achieved the correct IELTS level in English on the <a href="#">Language Requirements page</a>.</li> </ul> <p>For further details regarding international admissions and advice please visit the <a href="#">International Applications page</a>.</p>
<b>Selection Criteria</b>	<p>Offers will be made based on the following selection criteria, which applicants are expected to demonstrate:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Sufficient prior knowledge and experience of and/or potential in games design and/or coding and design practice to be able to successfully complete the programme of study and have an academic or professional background in a relevant subject.</li> <li>• Knowledge of the world of visual culture and ability to engage in critical discussion.</li> </ul>
<b>Scheduled Learning and Teaching</b>	<p>During your course you will engage with learning and teaching that includes both online and face-to-face modes. The advertised scheduled activity for the course will be delivered through a combination of live, synchronous and asynchronous on-line learning. This is often described as blended learning.</p> <p>Definitions of our learning and teaching modes can be found <a href="#">here</a>.</p>

# Awards and Percentage of Scheduled Learning

## Year 1

<b>Percentage of Scheduled Learning</b>	<b>21</b>
<b>Awards</b>	<b>Credits</b>
Postgraduate Certificate (Exit Only)	60
Postgraduate Diploma (Exit Only)	120

# Course Aims and Outcomes

The Aims and Outcomes of this Course are as follows:

Aim/Outcome	Description
Aim	Build your individual capacity to develop as a leader in the field of games design by providing you with the opportunity to develop as a professional practitioner.
Aim	Provide you with the opportunity to produce games that use critical ideas to develop innovative and culturally astute practice enabling you to use ideas emanating from other domains of knowledge in designing game experience.
Aim	Enable you to produce games designed using processes widely used in industry and professional practice by providing you with the opportunity to work with a range of media in the production and dissemination of games.
Aim	Enable you to understand games as cultural artefacts that are at the forefront of new and distributed collective experience.
Aim	Provide you with the opportunity to identify and develop your individual area of expertise within the field of games design.
Aim	Enable you to solve problems with self-direction and originality, in the production of experimental games by developing your ability to work with game experience in a self-directed and brief-led context.
Aim	Develop your ability to employ rigour in the analysis, synthesis and evaluation of games design theory and practice, through the completion of a major project.
Outcome	Demonstrate an advanced understanding of the field of games design through advanced practice. (Knowledge, Enquiry, Realisation, Communication)
Outcome	Demonstrate an advanced understanding of critical ideas that frame experimental games design – through visual presentation and written reflection. (Enquiry, Communication)
Outcome	Address advanced critical perspectives through game prototypes. (Enquiry, Knowledge, Communication, Process)

Outcome	Present complex ideas to diverse audiences in the context of professional practice. (Communication, Process)
Outcome	Present coherent arguments and advocate for particular game concepts. (Process, Realisation)
Outcome	Use relevant digital and non-digital tools, platforms and processes to produce advanced game prototypes at an advanced level. (Enquiry, Realisation)
Outcome	Understand the potential of a range of software, media and workshop tools to develop complex ideas and deliver game experience at an advanced level. (Enquiry, Realisation, Communication, Process)
Outcome	Demonstrate an advanced understanding of the value of games design for other domains of knowledge and the broader design and media industries. (Enquiry, Knowledge, Communication, Process, Realisation)

<b>Distinctive Features</b>	
1	Explore Games in their Broadest Sense: The course considers games from a wide range of mediums. Knowledge and experience of games design is applied to tabletop games, digital games, social games, installation games and everything in between. The course looks at the unique and shared properties of the multifaceted aspects of the subject.
2	Games as cultural artefacts: The course understands games as an increasingly important part of the cultural life of contemporary society. This relatively new appreciation in the canon of cultural activity is important, as it is an area where our increasing 'connectedness' is being harnessed in radical new forms of collective cultural experience. The course provides both a practice based and critical framework with which to understand and act in this fast evolving cultural arena.
3	Play: The notions/concepts of goal, challenge and obstacle are critically evaluated and assessed when exploring the motive forces of play in game design. This focus means that technical experimentation rests on a rigorous design understanding that is unique to games design rather than relying on cinematic tropes and/or fantastical narrative conceits.
4	Critical Gaming: The course explores ideas from critical theory through the practice of games design. In practice this means exploring of ideas such as alienation through social technology within a game. The wider social and cultural impact of games both as artefacts and tools of experience are investigated through this critical framework.
5	Serious Games: Games have transformed from being only a pastime, which in itself is still an important area of study, to having serious applications. This recent change increases their industrial relevance. Gamification of tasks, such as training, learning or for the purposes of increasing customer interaction or reducing someone's perception of pain during an operation have serious consequences and the ethical issues that need to be considered are explicitly explored.
6	Future leadership of the games industry: The course aspires to create the future leaders of the games industry specifically by coupling the rigor of academics study, cultural awareness and critical thought with a methodological, technically astute and practice-based design approach. This aims to produce practitioners who are able to understand the potential of game experience and to become leaders who change the trajectory of the games industry.
7	Games Design as creative discipline & experimental practice: The course explicitly recognises games design as a creative discipline. This is in recognition of that fact that games designers have carved out a careers building their own games for a range of platforms, environments and user types. The course is also firmly rooted

in experimental practice and the course ensures that you are equipped with both a technical and critical skillset that allows you to produce a broad portfolio of innovative game prototypes. As a games design student at LCC you will also be able to take advantage of initiatives such as our games incubator, which see's students provided with funding to take casual games to market quickly upon graduation.

8 LCC Graduate School: The course is part of the wider LCC graduate community offering access to cross disciplinary visiting speaker and Graduate community events in one of the largest PG Design and Media departments in Europe. MA Games Design Students are offered access to the Graduate School Industry Mentoring Scheme, which encourages and supports postgraduate student's transition from education to industry. The scheme places students and graduates (up to one year) of all disciplines with industry professionals to support their development as they enter the creative industries. Throughout the year, the Graduate School also runs a series of Industry Round Tables, putting students in front of a group of peers and professionals to share experiences, explore careers and forge connections

9 The University of the Arts London and the London College of Communication maintains strong industry links and delivers a world-class environment within which to study animation design. You can access resources ranging from our Stanley Kubrick archive or our industry standard production resources in addition to the largest specialist library within the university. The Screen School currently has links with the BBC, Nexus, Sennep, All of Us, IDEO the V&A, Creative Review, Game sys, Channel 4, Eye Magazine, Imperial War Museum, Tate, Bloomberg, Pentagram, Samsung and is the host of London's first Maker Faire. It is this environment within the Screen School at LCC that distinguishes the course and ensures that you will benefit from this long established network and move with confidence into your chosen field.

## Course Detail

MA Games Design critically examines the concept of play in relation to the practice of games design. You will produce playable prototype gaming experiences and use games design as a means to test critical ideas from broader culture.

### What can you expect?

The course is particularly interested in how games design principles are being used more generally and how these ideas impact upon our increasingly digital culture.

MA Games Design will enable you to understand and articulate the unique value of game experience to an increasingly interested design industry and allow you to understand the value of your game experience prototypes.

Building on LCC's resources, in digital, time-based and interactive media, alongside printmaking, graphic design and visual communication, the course encourages experimental and reflective practice that echoes the cross media nature of the design, communication and media industries.

The course also supports progression to research at MPhil/PhD level as well as to advanced self-directed experimental practice.

### Mode of Study

MA Games Design is in Full Time mode which runs for 45 weeks over 15 months. You will be expected to commit 40 hours per week to study.

## Course Units

Each course is divided into units, which are credit-rated. The minimum unit size is 20 credits. The MA course structure involves five units, totalling 180 credits.

You will respond to briefs that are set to test your learning, in the units described below:

### Autumn, Term 1

#### Design and Prototyping (40 credits)

In Term 1, students explore a range of both technical and conceptual approaches to games design and development and work with a range of technologies by producing playable prototypes.

Students will engage in critical study that significantly expands their understanding of what gaming experience is and how it operates at both the level of the individual and society. This phase is the technical and conceptual basis for the subsequent phases of the course.

## **Spring, Term 2**

### **Critical Play and Experimental Development (40 credits)**

#### **Collaborative Unit (20 credits)**

In Term 2, students specifically develop games that reflect the critical context set out in Term One and test these issues through the design and production of critical games.

This practice is underpinned by a programme that gives students the technical skills to be able to experiment widely with various games design technologies and platforms when prototyping their critical games. Term 2 specifically contains a cross-College collaborative unit.

## **Summer, term 3**

### **Critical Play and Experimental Development (continued)**

#### **Analysing the Gaming Experience (20 credits)**

#### **Final Major Project and Thesis (60 credits)**

In Term 3, students synthesise the knowledge, skills and experience from the first two terms of the course in the production of a self-directed project and associated thesis.

## **Autumn, Term 4**

### **Final Major Project and Thesis (continued)**

If you are unable to continue or decide to exit the course, there are two possible exit awards. A Postgraduate Certificate will be awarded on successful completion of the first 60 credits and a Postgraduate Diploma will be awarded on successful completion of the first 120 credits.

### **Learning and Teaching Methods**

- Lectures/Large Group Learning
- Workshop and Seminar Learning
- Academic Tutorials
- Individual and group critiques

- Individual project work
- Self-Directed learning
- Assessed Assignments
- Technical Workshops
- Demonstrations

### **Assessment Methods**

- The Portfolio of Work
- Prepared writing
- Crits and presentations

### **Reference Points**

The following reference points were used in designing the course:

- The College Learning and Teaching Strategy
- The College Assessment Strategy
- The UAL and College approach to Personal and Professional Development
- Feedback from current employers in the games industry
- The Learning and Teaching policies of the University of the Arts London
- University of the Arts London Level Descriptors
- Framework for Higher Education Qualifications
- Art and Design subject benchmark statement
- Feedback from current students
- Consultation with staff team



*The University will use all reasonable endeavours to provide the Course and the services described in this Output. There may be occasions whereby the University needs to add, remove or alter content in relation to your Course as may be appropriate for example the latest requirements of a commissioning or accrediting body, or in response to student feedback, or to comply with applicable law or due to circumstances beyond its control. The University aim to inform you of any changes as soon as is reasonably practicable*

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