MA Games Design

Programme Specification 2021/22

Awarding Body	University of the Arts London
College	London College of Communication
School	University of the Arts London
Programme	Moving Image and Digital Arts (L060)
FHEQ Level	Level 7 Masters
Course Credits	180
Mode	Full Time
Duration of Course	1 year
Valid From	September 1st 2021
Course Entry Requirements	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. 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. 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. **Coding experience** 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.

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

	as part of your application, please include any information about your English test score. • IELTS 6.5 (or equivalent) is required, with a minimum of 5.5 in each of the four skills. • If your first language is not English, you can check you have achieved the correct IELTS level in English on the [Language Requirements page](#). For further details regarding international admissions and advice please visit the [International Applications page](#).
Selection Criteria	Offers will be made based on the following selection criteria, which applicants are expected to demonstrate: • 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. • Knowledge of the world of visual culture and ability to engage in critical discussion.
Scheduled Learning and Teaching	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. Definitions of our learning and teaching modes can be found [here](#).

Awards and Percentage of Scheduled Learning

Year 1

Percentage of Scheduled Learning	18
Awards	**Credits**
Postgraduate Certificate (Exit Only)	60
Postgraduate Diploma (Exit Only)	120
Master of Arts	180

Course Aims and Outcomes

The Aims and Outcomes of this Course are as follows:

Aim/Outcome	Description
Aim	Critically understand games design by creating small unique gaming experiences and expand a personal portfolio of games.
Aim	Experiment as games designers with freedom to explore games in many different mediums as well as push and expand the limits of what games are.
Aim	Encourage problem solving and originality in the production of meaningful games by developing an ability to work with game experience in a self-directed and brief-led context.
Aim	Facilitate an environment for students to work individually or in small groups as part of a supportive community of game makers, creators and designers from diverse practices.
Aim	Rigorous academic practice, using critical and analytical understanding of literature from within games design and other domains of knowledge.
Outcome	Prototype experimental game concepts using suitable processes and justify their suitability for development. (Knowledge, Process, Communication, Realisation)
Outcome	Critically analyse games and demonstrate a deep understanding of how they function and relate to other domains of knowledge. (Enquiry, Knowledge, Communication)
Outcome	Consider sustainable design, within their practice as a games design, both in relation to environmental impact and personal wellbeing. (Knowledge, Process)
Outcome	Demonstrate a critical and diverse understanding of the academic field of game design and how it relates to their practice through visual presentation and written reflection. (Enquiry, Communication)
Outcome	Contextualise and develop games as diverse cultural artefacts that present critical ideas back to society. (Enquiry, Knowledge, Realisation)

Outcome	Create self-guided projects demonstrating advanced understanding game practice through the completion of a major project. (Enquiry, Knowledge, Process, Communication, Realisation)

	Distinctive Features
1	An open and extensive view of games: 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	Game as critical and cultural artefacts: Games are an increasingly important part of the cultural life of contemporary society. The course provides both a practice based and critical framework with which to understand and employ.
3	Play and Player Experience: The players experience is at the heart of games design. For the player to understand the game they must first be able to engage with it. Experimentation rests on a rigorous design understanding that is unique to games design.
4	Game Design as creative discipline & experimental practice: Firmly rooted in experimental practice 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.
5	Situated in the CILCET accredited Screen School at London College of Communication, this MA Game Design course resides within the Moving Image and Digital Arts programme and is well placed both in terms of its industry links and global reputation to extend its subject disciplines and practice for the benefit of all its students. This also offers opportunities for a diverse discourse to take place across both undergraduate and postgraduate courses.

Course Detail

MA Games Design critically examines the concept of play in relation to the practice of games design. You will produce playable gaming experiences and use games design as a means to test critical ideas from broader culture. Your practice will be underpinned by rigorous research, case-studies of existing games and critical reflection of your own practice through academic writing.

What can you expect?

- Studio experience, working alongside and with other students on independent and small group projects.
- A combination of taught content and supported independent learning on personally selected projects.
- A combination of experimental practical game design projects underpinned with game design theory research and writing.
- Freedom to work in a range of genres and different mediums of play utilising the range of diverse facilities within LCC, such as printmaking, electronics and the 3D workshop.
- Learn programming and development tools to create small playable experiences.
- Develop your game portfolio and academic skills to progress into research at MPhil/PhD or advanced self-directed experimental practice.

Work Experience and Opportunities

Core to the course design is creating an industry ready portfolio of games that reflects your personal creative practice within games design. To diversify and expand the range of the course content, speakers from industry will be invited to provide guest lectures and discussions on a range of subjects in which they have personal and professional experience. Opportunity to take part in exhibitions and events are important, past students have exhibited their work at the Tate Modern and the Victoria and Albert Museum and have gone on to exhibit their games across the world.

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)

Prototype a range of playable games in different mediums and genres, focussing on testing concepts and ideas. Analyse and compare game mechanics and systems from existing games to gain an understanding in specific elements of games design.

Spring, Term 2

Collaborative Unit (20 credits)

Work with other students from across the college or external partners and explore the influence of different subject knowledge areas and technical skills on your game design practice resulting in a playable outcome.

Understanding Play (20 credits)

Utilise both primary and secondary research to gain a critical understanding of game design theory on your subject of your choosing. Consider both the existing academic writing on game design theory and utilising theory from other subject domains.

Summer, Term 3

Critical Play and Development (40 credits)

Explore how the mechanics of play can be used in your own practice to express meaning and convey a message by developing a playable game experience. Examine games as a form of literature, which can be deconstructed and critically analysed.

Final Major Project and Thesis (60 credits)

Synthesis the knowledge, skills and experience from the previous units 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
- Development logs
- 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

Course Diagram

Week	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30	31	32	33	34	35	36		37	38	39	40	41	42	43	44	45	46	47

Unit

- Design and Prototyping (40 credits) — Weeks 2–10, **S** at Week 11
- Collaborative Unit (20 credits) — Weeks 11–19, **S** at Week 20
- Understanding Play (20 credits) — Weeks 11–19, **S** at Week 20
- Critical Play & Development (40 credits) — Weeks 21–29, **S** at Week 30
- Final Major Project and Thesis (60 credits) — Weeks 31–36
- Final Major Project and Thesis cont. — Weeks 38–46, **S** at Week 38 and **S** at Week 47

Start of Undergraduate Year (Week 1)

PG Summer Break (Week between 36 and 37)

Start of Undergraduate Year (Week 37)

PG Overlap Period with new year intake

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