

# Computer Games Design (Story Development)

<b>Final award</b>	BA (Hons)
<b>Intermediate awards available</b>	Cert HE, Dip HE, Ordinary Degree
<b>UCAS code</b>	GWLF - Level 1 entry (3 Year full time route)
<b>Details of professional body accreditation</b>	N/A
<b>Relevant QAA Benchmark statements</b>	Art & Design, Computing, NAWE Creative Writing
<b>Date specification last up-dated</b>	March 2012

## Profile

### The summary - UCAS programme profile

#### **BANNER BOX:**

Convert your passion for games into knowledge about how to design them

#### **ENTRY REQUIREMENTS**

The minimum requirements for entry for Level 1 entry is 280 UCAS tariff points from: A/AS level (Including 2 A2 passes), GNVQ, AVCE, Scottish Highers, International Baccalaureate, European Baccalaureate, BTEC / SCOTEC Diploma, Relevant Access Course or successful completion of the Level 0. Other qualifications, including overseas, may be considered.

Applicant are expected to have an A2 level in English Literature or Language, or the equivalent, or they may be asked to provide a sample of written work, which will be assessed by the programme team.

We also welcome applicants from mature students who do not have formal qualifications but may have relevant experience.

Students may be admitted through Accreditation of Experiential Learning (AEL) or Accreditation of Certificated Learning (ACL) processes.

Students applying to this programme will be expected to demonstrate a specific interest in this area of study and should have a commitment to engaging with the subject. Applicants may be invited for interview.

If you have the potential, commitment and enthusiasm to study for a degree but are unable to meet the entry requirements for your chosen degree programme you can apply for the Extended Degree programme route. An Extended Degree includes a Level 0 year, making the period of study 4 years or 5 years if the Extended Degree programme is taken on a part-time basis. The programme provides a supportive learning space for students to experience academic studies at university and helps develop confidence and academic skills in

preparation for Levels 1-3. The programme is also highly rated by students who successfully complete the programme. Successful completion of the programme guarantees entry to a range of Single Honours programmes or a Combined Programme of study within the School of Arts and Digital Industries.

More details of the Extended Degree programme can be found [here](#)

### **Overseas Qualifications**

Overseas qualifications are accepted for entry and will be checked for appropriate matriculation to UK Higher Education undergraduate programmes. You can get advice from the British Council or our admissions unit on 020 8223 2835 on the different overseas qualifications accepted for entry. You must be able to understand and express yourself in both written and spoken English and some evidence e.g. For level 1 entry a TOEFL score of 550 or an IELTS score of 6.0 (no skill level below 5).

### **ABOUT THE PROGRAMME**

#### **What is Computer Games Design (Story Development)?**

This is a program that shows you how to plan, design and implement computer games, with an emphasis on the role of story and narrative design for games. Traditionally, undergraduate programmes in the area of computer game design focus on either programming or visual design, requiring students to have skills or a portfolio of maths/computing or fine art. In contrast this program focuses on other important aspects of games design including paper-based design and prototyping, iterative design methods, project and production management, multidisciplinary group work and interactive story development.

#### **Degrees at Information and Communication Technologies Field at UEL**

This program focuses on story development for computer games, and the way that story combines with other elements of a game within the context of learning about the whole games development process. As part of the program you will be required to produce games design documentation, as well as plan and manage implementation of games prototypes, both individually and as part of a development team. The programme gives you a foundation in the entire games development process and allows you to acquire skills in 2D/3D graphics production, player/user/market analysis and targeted design, and makes use of industry standard games development environments to allow for prototyping without a background in computer programming. Our programme is unique in focusing on the skills and understanding between design and development and will equip you with essential skills for the growing games industry.

#### **Programme structure**

The first year introduces you to the basics of computer games design, story development and games theory, as well as introductory graphics and prototyping production techniques and theories:

- Digital graphic creation and manipulation

- Exploration of the creative process introducing a range of writing and reading strategies
- Traditional narrative structures in text and film and their application to interactive story development for computer games
- Models and theories of communication as applied to interactive design and development
- Fundamentals of games theory , design and production
- Player/audience analysis
- Individual and team-based prototyping, playtesting and design

The second year focuses on more detailed games planning/implementation/production management and story development skills, including:

- 3-D graphics production
- Level design
- Story/narrative construction and development and scriptwriting
- Managing a live client project as part of a design and development team
- Skills for success in academic research

The final year allows you to examine current issues in games markets, undertake large scale research and games design and development projects and develop more advanced technical skills including:

- Analysis of games markets and targeted design for a specific market
- Dynamic Computer Games Environments
- Double weighted individual dissertation/project that allows you to choose your own research question and develop and test a prototype as part of your primary research
- Double weighted team-based project where you work as part of a large multidisciplinary team to design and implement a fully working game, from initial concept generation to final implementation

### **Learning environment**

Learning takes place through lectures, seminars and practical workshops in specialist labs, screenings, presentations, crits and invited speakers from industry. Tutorial sessions are also available, as well as personal one-to-one supervision of final year projects and dissertations.

### **Assessment**

Students undertake six modules per year. Marks for level 1 modules do not count towards the final degree classification. Most assessment is via practical, theoretical and group and individual project coursework.

### **Work experience/placement opportunities**

There is the opportunity to work in small groups or individually on live client briefs with in both the 2nd year of this degree programme.

### **Project work**

Students are expected to undertake project work at all levels of study, culminating in their third year double project module. One third of the final year is made up of project work - this counts as almost a quarter of the total mark for the degree. This, and other areas of study, allows students to develop their own ideas, work in groups and/or research specific topics.

### **Added value**

The programme offers a range of extracurricular games design and development activities, including Games Design workshop, Games Club and the UEL SU Computer Games Society which run a number of events throughout the year. Games Design and Games Club sessions give students from all levels of study an opportunity to meet, both for technical or coursework assistance, planning, discussion and implementation and playtesting of non-assessed projects. In Games Club students play a wide-range of paper-based role-playing, board and card games as well as playtest paper-based prototypes of assessed work as well as non-assessed design projects. The games design teaching team attend and support these sessions.

### **IS THIS THE PROGRAMME FOR ME?**

#### **If you are interested in...**

- Computer games
- Understanding what makes compelling gameplay
- Designing and developing computer games
- Narrative design and story creation
- Interaction and experience design
- Level design

#### **If you enjoy...**

- Creative writing and story development
- 2D and 3D image creation and manipulation
- Working in groups with clients and external agents
- Researching developments in computer games design and development
- Applying practical skills and theoretical knowledge to real-world design challenges

#### **If you want...**

- To acquire or enhance a range of practical and theoretical skills relevant to a career in computer game design and development.
- To develop study and research skills essential for exploring the field of games design and development, including analytical reading and note-taking, essay planning and writing, reports, independent thinking, problem solving and coherent reasoning.
- To have the foundation necessary to extend study at the MA level.

### **Your future career**

There are a number of potential careers in games design, development, or management within the games or new media industries.

## **How we support you**

Each student is allocated a personal tutor to guide them through their studies. There is also a programme tutor, who is responsible for your degree and can also offer help and advice. Additional academic support is provided by the School's dedicated Student Support Office. The university also offers support in the following areas: residential; student finance advice; careers advice; study skills development; IT/learning resources.

## **Bonus factors**

Extracurricular activities including:

- Games Design Workshop
- Games Club
- UEL SU Computer Games Society Events

# **Outcomes**

## **Programme aims and learning outcomes**

### **What is this programme designed to achieve?**

This programme is designed to give you the opportunity to:

- To enable students to understand the nature, function and context of story/narrative development in computer games
- To develop in students the skills in computer games design and development practice – iterative targeted design, planning, development and communication and management skills
- To develop in students an understanding of and skills in critical practice in the games industry - not solely vocational 'how-to' skills but also the ability to think critically about 'why' and 'with what effect'
- To develop in students the ability to work both independently and as part of a design and development team

### **What will you learn?**

#### **Knowledge**

- Develop skills in operating computer games design and development related ICTs and assessing their advantages and disadvantages
- Understand and apply theories of graphical environment designing, software interface development, interactive narrative and story development, market analysis and its role in design and development – all related to computer games design
- Understand ethical, legal and professional responsibilities of new media professionals
- Understand and apply theories of traditional narrative elements to the development of interactive narratives for computer games

#### **Thinking skills**

- Use theoretical concepts and perspectives to explain the development of computer games in and commercial settings
- Evaluate the relationship between theory and creative practice in the field of computer game design and production
- Gather, analyse and comment critically on ideas associated with computer game design and story development using both traditional and modern sources
- Analyse the legal and cultural factors which shape the development and implementation of computer games design
- Understand and apply principles of computer game design, story development, production management and group work to project work
- Critically evaluate various approaches to computer games design and development

### **Subject-Based Practical skills**

- Design and create prototypes of computer games for a variety of audiences
- Design and create 2D and 3D graphics
- Level design
- Learn to use professional-level application software with a minimum of direct instructions
- Identify the elements which are likely to make for effective computer games

### **Skills for life and work (general skills)**

- Critically evaluate the experience of developing a project report
- Understand and utilise different research approaches
- Work and research independently
- Work in a group and solve problems associated with group activities
- Create and deliver presentation
- Write technical reports and academic papers
- Use computers and application software effectively

## **Structure**

### **The programme structure**

#### **Introduction**

All programmes are credit-rated to help you to understand the amount and level of study that is needed.

One credit is equal to 10 hours of directed study time (this includes everything you do e.g. lecture, seminar and private study).

Credits are assigned to one of 5 levels:

- 0 equivalent in standard to GCE 'A' level and is intended to prepare students for year one of an undergraduate degree programme
- 1 equivalent in standard to the first year of a full-time undergraduate degree programme

- 2 equivalent in standard to the second year of a full-time undergraduate degree programme
- 3 equivalent in standard to the third year of a full-time undergraduate degree programme
- M equivalent in standard to a Masters degree

### **Credit rating**

The overall credit-rating of this programme is 360 credits.

### **Typical duration**

The expected duration of this programme is three years when attended in full-time mode or five years in part-time mode. It is possible to move from a full-time mode of study to a part-time mode of study and vice-versa, to accommodate any external factors such as financial constraints or domestic commitments. Many of our students make use of this flexibility and this may impact on the overall duration of their study period.

### **How the teaching year is divided**

The teaching year begins in September and ends in June.

A typical student, in full-time attendance mode of study, will register for 120 credits in an academic year. A student in a part-time mode of study may register for up to 80 credits in any academic year.

### **What you will study when**

This programme is part of a modular degree scheme. A student registered in a full-time attendance mode will take six 20 credit modules (or fewer, if any are 40 credit modules) per year. An honours degree student will complete modules totalling 120 credits at level one, modules totalling 120 credits at level 2 and modules totalling 120 credits at level 3.

It is possible to bring together modules from one field with modules from another to produce a combined programme. Subjects are offered in a variety of combinations:

- Single 120 credits at levels one, two and three
- Major 80 credits at levels one, two and three
- Joint 60 credits at levels one, two and three
- Minor 40 credits at levels one, two and three.

Modules are defined as:

- Core Must be taken
- Option Select from a range of identified module within the field
- sity Wide Option Select from a wide range of university wide options

The following are the core and optional requirements for the single and major pathways for this programme

## Level 1 entry

LEVEL	UEL Module Code	TITLE	SKILLS MODULES	CREDITS	STATUS SINGLE
1	MS1300	Games Analysis	Y	20	Core
1	MS1301	Visual Design		20	Core
1	CC1101	Creative Imagination		20	Core
1	MS1303	Intro to Computer Games Design		20	Core
1	MS1306	Intro to Computer Games Development		20	Core
1	CC1102	Writer's Voice		20	Option
1	FA1006	Introduction to Drawing		20	Option
1	PA1304	Sound Design 1		20	Option
1				20	University Wide Option
2	MS2301	3D Graphics		20	Core
2	MS2302	Level Design		20	Core
2	MS2303	Live Team Project	Y	20	Core
2	MS2306	New Media Research Methods		20	Core
2	CC2105	Story & Myth		20	Core
2	MS2201	Screenwriting 1		20	Option
2	MS2305	Multimedia Design		20	Option
2				20	University Wide Option
3	MS3000	Dissertation/Project	Y	40	Core
3	MS3306	Professional Games Design Project		40	Core
3	MS3303	Games Markets: Analysis, Regulation and Targeted Design		20	Core
3	MS3302	Dynamic Computer Game Environments		20	Core

\* At least one of the two modules must be taken. Students may decide to do both, but if not, one may be replaced by a university wide option.

## Requirements for gaining an award

In order to gain an honours degree you will need to obtain 360 credits including:

- A minimum of 120 credits at level one or higher
- A minimum of 120 credits at level two or higher
- A minimum of 120 credits at level three or higher



In order to gain an ordinary degree you will need to obtain a minimum of 300 credits including:

- A minimum of 120 credits at level one or higher
- A minimum of 120 credits at level two or higher
- A minimum of 60 credits at level three or higher

In order to gain a Diploma of Higher Education you will need to obtain at least 240 credits including a minimum of 120 credits at level one or higher and 120 credits at level two or higher

In order to gain a Certificate of Higher Education you will need to obtain 120 credits at level one or higher.

In order to gain a Foundation Degree you will need to obtain a minimum of 240 credits including:

- A minimum of 120 credits at level one or higher
- A minimum of 120 credits at level two or higher

(A foundation degree is linked to a named Honours degree onto which a student may progress after successful completion of the Foundation degree.)

## **Degree Classification**

Where a student is eligible for an Honours degree, and has gained a minimum of 240 UEL credits at level 2 or level 3 on the programme, including a minimum of 120 UEL credits at level 3, the award classification is determined by calculating:

The arithmetic mean of the best 100 credits at level 3  $\times 2/3$  + The arithmetic mean of the next best 100 credits at levels 2 and/or 3  $\times 1/3$

and applying the mark obtained as a percentage, with all decimal points rounded up to the nearest whole number, to the following classification

70% - 100% First Class Honours  
60% - 69% Second Class Honours, First Division  
50% - 59% Second Class Honours, Second Division  
40% - 49% Third Class Honours  
0% - 39% Not passed

## **Assessment**

### **Teaching, learning and assessment**

#### **Teaching and learning**

#### **Knowledge is developed through**

- Formal lectures (Thinking skills & Knowledge)
- Interactive lectures/seminars (Thinking skills & Knowledge)
- Group discussions and informal presentations (Practical skills, Thinking skills & Skills for life and work)
- Individual tutorials and independent learning (Thinking skills and Knowledge)
- Debates involving outside speakers (Practical skills, Thinking skills & Skills for life and work)
- Supervised and unsupervised workshops (Practical Skills, Thinking skills, Skills for life and work & Knowledge)
- Analysis of practical and theoretical issues (Thinking skills & Knowledge)
- Project sessions (Practical skills, Thinking skills & Knowledge)
- Research seminars (Practical skills, Thinking skills & Knowledge)
- Project Supervision (Practical Skills, Thinking skills & Knowledge)

## **Assessment**

### **Knowledge is assessed by**

- Coursework essays, reports, evaluations, reviews, reflections and presentations
- Exercises and discussions undertaken in seminar and workshop sessions

### **Thinking skills are assessed by**

- Coursework essays, reports, evaluations, reviews, reflections and presentations
- Exercises and discussions undertaken in seminar and workshop sessions

### **Practical skills are assessed by**

- Practical projects and reflections on production process
- Assignments demonstrating the ability to use software and hardware to produce and end product
- Demonstrating competency in workshops

### **Skills for life and work (general skills) are assessed by**

- Involvement in and contribution to seminar/workshop sessions
- Ability to understand and meet requirements of module specification
- Quality of written work in assignments
- Strict assignment deadlines
- Involvement in and contribution to group project work

## **Quality**

### **How we assure the quality of this programme**

#### **Before this programme started**

Before the programme started, the following was checked:

- there would be enough qualified staff to teach the programme;
- adequate resources would be in place;
- the overall aims and objectives were appropriate;
- the content of the programme met national benchmark requirements;
- the programme met any professional/statutory body requirements;
- the proposal met other internal quality criteria covering a range of issues such as admissions policy, teaching, learning and assessment strategy and student support mechanisms.

This is done through a process of programme approval which involves consulting academic experts including some subject specialists from other institutions.

### **How we monitor the quality of this programme**

The quality of this programme is monitored each year through evaluating:

- external examiner reports (considering quality and standards);
- statistical information (considering issues such as the pass rate);
- student feedback.

Drawing on this and other information, programme teams undertake the annual Review and Enhancement Process which is co-ordinated at School level and includes student participation. The process is monitored by the University's Quality Standing Committee.

Once every six years an in-depth review of the whole field is undertaken by a panel that includes at least two external subject specialists. The panel considers documents, looks at student work, speaks to current and former students and speaks to staff before drawing its conclusions. The result is a report highlighting good practice and identifying areas where action is needed.

### **The role of the programme committee**

This programme has a programme committee comprising all relevant teaching staff, student representatives and others who make a contribution towards the effective operation of the programme (e.g. library/technician staff). The committee has responsibilities for the quality of the programme. It provides input into the operation of the Review and Enhancement Process and proposes changes to improve quality. The programme committee plays a critical role in the quality assurance procedures.

### **The role of external examiners**

The standard of this programme is monitored by at least one external examiner. External examiners have two primary responsibilities:

- To ensure the standard of the programme;
- To ensure that justice is done to individual students.

External examiners fulfil these responsibilities in a variety of ways including:

- Approving exam papers/assignments;

- Attending assessment boards;
- Reviewing samples of student work and moderating marks;
- Ensuring that regulations are followed;
- Providing feedback through an annual report that enables us to make improvements for the future

### **Listening to the views of students**

The following methods for gaining student feedback are used on this programme:

- Module evaluations
- Student representation on programme committees

Students are notified of the action taken through:

- Circulating the minutes of the programme committee on UELPlus
- Feedback to student representatives on previous minutes of meeting

### **Listening to the views of others**

The following methods are used for gaining the views of other interested parties:

- Annual student satisfaction questionnaire
- Questionnaires to former students

## **Further Information**

### **Alternative locations for studying this programme**

<b>Location</b>	<b>Which elements?</b>	<b>Taught by UEL staff</b>	<b>Taught by local staff</b>	<b>Method of Delivery</b>
-	-	-	-	-

### **Where you can find further information**

Further information about this programme is available from:

- The UEL web site (<http://www.uel.ac.uk>)
- The programme handbook
- Module study guides
- UEL Manual of General Regulations <http://www.uel.ac.uk/qa/>
- UEL Quality Manual <http://www.uel.ac.uk/qa/>
- Regulations for the Academic Framework <http://www.uel.ac.uk/academicframework/>
- UEL Guide to Undergraduate Programmes
- School of Arts & Digital Industries website (<http://www.uel.ac.uk/adi/>)
- Visit our gallery of student work here: <http://www.uel.ac.uk/adi/showcase/studentwork/>