



Unit Title	How to be a Games Designer
FHEQ Level	Level 4
Unit Code	GMD20103
Credit Value	30 Credits
Unit Type	Subject

Learning Hours			
Staff – Student Contact Hours		Independent Study Hours	
Classes	60	Independent Study	90
Supervised access to resources	30	Preparation for Assessment	15
		Unsupervised Access to Resources	95
Total			300

Unit Description

This unit will introduce students to the theory and practice of games design and how it relates to games making.

It will introduce the core concepts behind modern games design and students will explore the fundamental theoretical framework of games, explore critical games studies and design simple games using physical and digital tools. Students will also explore the history and culture of games and games development.

Students will be introduced to how designers harness creativity and how to fail properly. The unit will stress the importance of creative thinking and practice as well as how to use design to solve problems.

Students will learn what the formal elements of games are and how they interrelate, they will study design schemas and explore game feel, player motivations and the psychology of gamers. Alongside, students will relate their own gaming history to the wider culture of gaming and reflect on some of the issues arising from gaming and games development.

The unit will encourage students to find technical solutions to game design problems and will encourage students to use technical learning from other units and independent study.

The Five Principles underpin the Mindsets and Skillsets Manifesto and are the foundation upon which all course curriculum frameworks and unit specifications are based. The relevant Principles as stated below have been mapped against the Learning Outcomes relevant to each course unit and at each level (see Programme Specifications for full description of the Five Principles):

1. Cultivate / Where the individual thrives.
2. Collaborate / Where disciplines combine and evolve.
3. Integrate / Where education engages industry.
4. Advocate / Where purpose meets practice.
5. Originate / Where enquiry informs creativity.

Unit Indicative Content

- Introduction to Games Design as a creative and practical area of study
- Introduce the critical and theoretical frameworks of games
- Making simple games using technologies appropriate to the skill level of the student
- Practical exercises encouraging problem solving, ideation and rapid prototyping
- Reflection and portfolio of games in a blog

Unit Aims

Within the context of the Honours Degree credit framework, the aims of the course are to:

- Introduce and build upon the core principles of games design and how it relates to student practice.
- Provide a supportive environment for students to engage in contemporary debate around games making and contribute to it through their practice;
- Encourage students' intellectual and personal development by fostering, enhancing and promoting their skills in creative and critical thinking, ideation and games making.
- Promote diversity, inclusivity, ethical, social and environmental awareness and provide opportunities for study and progression to all students.

The curriculum design and units will *“facilitate acquisition of appropriate knowledge and understanding, development of the necessary personal attributes, and application of the skills which equip and prepare students for continuing personal development and professional practice.”* (Subject Benchmark Statements, 2017).

Unit Learning Outcomes (Items in bold are the main focus within each LO for the unit)

LO1 Cultivate

- Technical Competence
- **Subject Knowledge**
- Resilience

Demonstrate capacity for developing discipline specific knowledge and technical competencies, supporting academic & practical self-efficacy and emerging employability abilities.

LO2 Collaborate

- **Inter-disciplinary Working**
- **Coproduction**

Demonstrate capacity for developing engagement with interdisciplinary and trans-disciplinary practices. Demonstrate capacity to engage with cooperative interactions and partnerships/teamwork.

Learning and Teaching Methods

Learning will be developed through: lectures, practical demonstrations, seminars, tutorials, master classes, critical self and peer appraisal and working collaboratively in the class or on location.

Where appropriate external guest speakers will further support delivery on the unit. Students will also need to undertake self-directed independent study to support learning.

The following methods play a significant role in learning and teaching on the course:

- Group projects underpin peer learning and are used to promote transferable skills such as team working and communication.
- Aligned Workshops, Lectures and Seminar sessions support the core teaching delivery.
- Research led projects are used to embed an understanding of research and research methods from the beginning to ensure students develop the skill to explore the contexts and conditions of their practice.
- Reflective journals are used throughout the course to promote the development of autonomous, confident and critically reflective, self-directed learners.
- Self-evaluative writing is used to enable students to take responsibility for their own learning by

identifying needs and prioritising and planning their learning.

- Self-assessment encourages students to take responsibility for monitoring and making judgments about aspects of their own learning.
- Peer assessment is used to promote assessment as part of learning.
- Live projects and student exhibitions and /or pop up events, support an outward facing ethos and encouraging students to develop their practice in relevant professional contexts

Assessment methods and tasks

Brief description of assessment methods

- *Formative Assessment: Students will be given the opportunity for formative feedback/feedforward. This will be given midway through the unit or at an appropriate time.*
- *Summative assessment: Is the completion of the main unit tasks – typically a finished outcome together with associated research and reflective elements and the completion of a digital workbook and accompanying treatments or presentations.*
- *Presentations to peers are usually within a small group environment where at least two tutors are present.*
- *Playable builds should be self-contained and not the editor project files unless stated by the brief*
- *In some cases digital files will be required to assess technical skill.*
- *Students will be notified of grades within 3 weeks of the hand in date and feedback is usually via an audio file in which at least two tutors contribute to feedback and feedforward.*

Assessment tasks

Weighting (%) (one grade or multi-grade unit)

- | Assessment tasks | Weighting (%) (one grade or multi-grade unit) |
|---|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none">● Games Design Blog with playable prototypes
(As described in Project Brief) | 100% |

Indicative Assessment Criteria

- **The ability to evidence understanding of core games design principles through written work and games making. (LO1, LO2)**
- **Demonstrate development of technical skills alongside critical understanding (LO1, LO2)**
- **Demonstrate the ability to be reflective of students' practice and learning. (LO1, LO2)**

Assessment criteria are the basis on which the judgment of the adequacy of the work is made. A more detailed assessment criteria will be specified in the brief.

Essential Reading list

1. Salen, Zimmerman (2003). Rules of Play: Game Design Fundamentals. MIT Press.
2. Koster, R (2013). A Theory of Fun for Games Design. O'Reilly Media
3. Schell, J (3ed, 2019). The Art of Games Design: A Book Of Lenses. CRC Press
4. Bogost, I (2015). How to Talk About Video Games. University of Minnesota Press.

5. Fullerton, T (2018). Game Design Workshop: A Playcentric Approach to Creating Innovative Games, Fourth Edition. CRC Press.

Detailed further reading and online resources will be provided in the brief and through the unit via AULA