Unit Title	How to Design Levels for Games
FHEQ Level	Level 4
Unit Code	GMD20104
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 processes of level building, from research and references to blocking out, prototyping and playtesting.

It will introduce students to the principles of environmental design and how to communicate visually through level design. Students will conduct research appropriate to the time and place that their level exists within, gather primary references from site visits and online resources and then proceed to building their level.

Students will be introduced to the foundational aspects of how level design and gameplay are related and showcase their abilities through physical and digital prototypes. Students will then design and conduct playtests and incorporate feedback into their designs.

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 level design as a design practice
- Introduce environmental design and how it relates to level design
- Introduce fundamentals of the visual language of levels
- Practical exercises encouraging problem solving, ideation and rapid prototyping
- Reflection and portfolio of games in a blog

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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 level design and environmental design

• Provide a supportive environment for students to engage in playtesting and critical feedback

• Encourage students' intellectual and personal development by fostering, enhancing and promoting their skills in research, reference building and visual communication and how it relates to game play.

• 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.

LO4 Advocate

- **Critical Reflection**
- Professional Identity

Demonstrate capacity for Critical Reflection, to consider and support personal and professional development.
Demonstrate emerging working approach/attitude that identifies consideration of social and ethically responsible working methods and how this informs personal practice.

LO5 Originate

- **Research**
- Experimentation
- **Ideation**

Demonstrate capacity for emerging enquiry methods to support practical and theoretical development in physical, written and oral forms.
Demonstrate capacity to consider ideas, materials, tests and outcomes that may inform practical and theoretical development in physical, written and oral forms.

Learning and Teaching Methods

Learning will be developed through: lectures, practical demonstrations, and online courses provided by 3rd parties. It will also feature seminars, tutorials, master classes, critical self and peer appraisal and collaborative working.

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 encourage students to develop their practice in relevant professional contexts.

Assessment methods and tasks

Brief description of assessment methods

- *Formative Assessment will offer 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 workbook or blog 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)*
Level Design Portfolio with playable levels (as described in the unit brief)	**100%**

Indicative Assessment Criteria

- **Demonstrate the ability to design a playable level using appropriate technology (LO1, LO5)**
- **Demonstrate the ability to produce coherent physical and digital assets. (LO4, LO5)**
- **Demonstrate the ability to use digital development tools. (LO1)**
- **Demonstrate the ability to be an advocate for their creative practice. (LO4)**

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. Kremers, R (2010). Level Design: Concept, Theory and Practice. A.K Peters Ltd
2. Totten, C (2019). An Architectural Approach to Level Design. CRC Press (2nd ed)
3. Totten, C (2015) Level Design: Processes and Experiences. CRC Press
4. Galuzin, A (2016) Pre-Production Blueprint: How to Plan Game Environments and Level Designs. World of Level Design.
5. Lilly, E.(2015) The big bad world of concept art for video games. Design Studio Press

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