

**UNIVERSITY OF WALES, NEWPORT
PROGRAMME SPECIFICATION**

**BA (Hons) COMPUTER GAMES DESIGN
135W300BF & 1352300BP**

Newport School of Art, Media and Design

BA (Hons) Computer Games Design is one of a wide range of undergraduate programmes offered by Newport School of Art, Media and Design as part of its renowned and innovative portfolio of study. The School comprises of three departments: Art and Photography, Design and The International Film School, Wales.

The core values of the School can be summarised thus:

Working within the framework of the University Mission Statement, the School of Art, Media and Design aims to consolidate and enhance the position of the University as an independent major provider of higher education in Wales and the United Kingdom by:

- 1. continuing to be a leading provider of Art, Media and Design education regionally, nationally and internationally;*
- 2. developing a strong identity for Newport School of Art, Media and Design within the context of Newport, while continuing to work closely with other Departments where appropriate;*
- 3. developing a closely connected Programme portfolio, recognising subject specialisms, while promoting the concept of interconnected programmes of study within the Modular framework;*
- 4. developing a research strategy, which is linked to all aspects of the School's portfolio;*

5. *developing through its Enterprise Centres an applied research culture that creatively links income generation initiatives to research and the School's overall academic ethos.*

Students enrolled on this programme will be part of the Department of Design.

Programme Overview

The Computer Games Design programme aims to develop students who are creative, imaginative and able practitioners who understand the importance of reflecting on their practice through their knowledge of the historical, cultural and theoretical contexts of computer game development and consumption. The history of the computer game and the parallel history of intellectual inquiry represented by academic game studies is established in the curriculum in a way that always informs the students' practice. Students are introduced to a number of potential roles within the industry, including modelling and animation, and are given access processes of design in the specific context of designing for computer games. Transferable skills that are highly valued by employers include collaborative skills, communication skills, 'listening' and interpretive skills, and the ability to work in a self-directing and self-critical manner. Recognition of the team-based studio model of the industry also ensures that students are also given experience of project management in a studio environment.

Programme Aims

The BA (Hons) Computer Games Design will provide a learning framework which supports the following:

1. The production of creative and insightful work to a high professional standard.
2. Graduates to assume roles in a variety of positions in the games and animation sector.
3. The rigorous critical and theoretical appraisal of games and their culture.
4. The productive critique of their own and other's work through informed discussion.
5. Working in a pan-disciplinary manner – capitalising on the variety of subject areas within the School.
6. The provision of core skills specific to the needs of the games design sector.
7. Instilling the professional values needed: versatility, reliability, creativity, and an ability to cogently communicate and present ideas.

These aims will be achieved through the design of a coherent, progressive and integrated programme structure and the implementation of Learning and Teaching strategy that strongly promotes the notion of learning by engagement in both theory and practice.

Learning Outcomes

The Learning Outcomes for the programme are defined to include the acquisition of knowledge and the ability to analyse data/text, and synthesise knowledge and information. Students' learning will progress from acquiring basic knowledge and skills in Level Four, to developing advanced knowledge and critical, analytical and technical skills in Level Six.

At each level, students will be expected to have achieved the following:

Level 4

1. Gained an overview of the underlying concepts and principles in the context and history of computer games development and the theoretical approaches to the production and consumption of computer games.
2. Developed basic practical study and transferable skills, for example, information retrieval, research, communication and presentation skills.
3. Developed a responsible, thoughtful and critical approach to their area of study.

Level 5

1. Developed a personal focus and the ability to think more independently.
2. Refined and extended their understanding and knowledge of the subject.
3. Further developed their practical study and transferable skills.
4. Become familiar with the professional requirements of their core and optional practices and acquired discipline related professional skills.
5. Gained sufficient knowledge and practical experience to computer games development projects successfully.

Level 6

1. Gained the knowledge, understanding and skills to engage confidently and proficiently in the production of an artifact.
2. Fulfilled an individually negotiated programme of work and produced a dissertation or equivalent and a research folder.
3. Demonstrated a high level of initiative and enterprise, autonomy and individuality in pursuit of their goals.
4. Acquired a range of fully developed transferable skills to facilitate their professional development and lifelong learning.

In addition to the level outcomes defined above, there are general learning outcomes common to all levels that involve transferable skills. These include the following:

1. The ability to communicate effectively in an oral, written and visual form, adapting to target audiences and situations.
2. The ability to identify targets, organise resources, manage workloads and meet deadlines in order to achieve intended goals.
3. The ability to carry out independent learning as a basis for academic study, lifelong learning and for personal professional development.
4. The ability to work productively with others in a group, accepting responsibility for achieving a defined goal.

These programme-based Learning Outcomes provide the framework for the Learning Outcomes at the module level. As the student progress through the programme, so the study of modules at an increasingly higher Level will allow the student to achieve the programme based Learning Outcomes. The programme Learning Outcomes are delivered in the Modules as follows:

MODULES	LO1	LO2	LO3	LO4	LO5
The World Viewed and Heard	X	X	X		
The World Played and Controlled	X	X	X		
Game Studies 1	X	X	X		
Mapping, Mining, Pitching, Planning	X	X	X		
Pleasure Principles and Reward Spectacles	X	X	X		
Game Studies 2	X	X	X		
The Post-Digital Analogue 1	X	X	X	X	X
Games and Animation Studies 1	X	X		X	
The Post-Digital Analogue 2	X	X	X	X	X
Games and Animation Studies 2	X	X		X	
Portfolio: Paper Production	X	X	X	X	
Portfolio: Digital Production	X	X	X	X	
Dissertation	X				

Benchmarks and Reference Points

Computer Games Design situates itself in relation to the academic standards for Communication, Media, Film and Cultural Studies courses. Though Computer Games Design is not specifically covered by the QAA benchmarking process, the numbers of key overlaps with associated media programmes necessitate reference to the QAA schema. Cited below are the relevant benchmarks¹ specific to CGD:

¹ For the full benchmarking list see:
<http://qaa.ac.uk/crntwork/benchmark/phase2/communications%5Ftextonly.htm>

Subject Knowledge and Understanding

Graduates of programmes in these fields will demonstrate knowledge and understanding drawn from the following:

Histories

1. An understanding of the interconnectedness of texts and contexts, and of the shifting configurations of communicative, cultural and aesthetic practices and systems.
2. An understanding of the historical evolution of particular genres, aesthetic traditions and forms, and of their current characteristics and possible future developments.
3. An understanding of the history of communication and media technologies and a recognition of the different ways in which the history of and current developments in media and communication can be understood in relation to technological change.

Processes and practices

1. An understanding of the material conditions of media and cultural consumption, and of the cultural contexts in which people appropriate, use and make sense of media and cultural products.
2. An awareness of how media products might be understood within broader concepts of culture.

Forms and aesthetics

1. An understanding of the aesthetic and formal qualities at play, and their relation to meanings, in particular cultural forms.
2. An insight into the cultural and social ways in which aesthetic judgements are constructed and aesthetic processes experienced.
3. An understanding of the student's own creative processes and practice through engagement in one or more production practices.
4. An examination of the role that aesthetic and other pleasures and judgements may play in the production and maintenance of social arrangements.
5. An awareness of a range of works (in one or more media) which generate different kinds of aesthetic pleasures.
6. An understanding of the narrative processes, generic forms and modes of representation at work in media and cultural texts.
7. An understanding of the ways in which specific media and their attendant technologies make possible different kinds of aesthetic effects and forms.

Subject Skills

The specific focus and breadth of range of individual degree programmes will determine not only the knowledge bases on which they draw but also the balance of skills and approaches developed within them. Graduates will demonstrate as appropriate some of the following subject-specific skills:

Skills of intellectual analysis

The ability to:

1. understand forms of communication, media and culture as they have emerged historically and appreciate the processes through which they have come into being, with reference to social, cultural and technological change;
2. examine such forms critically with appropriate reference to the social and cultural contexts and diversity of contemporary society and an understanding of how different social groups variously make use of and engage with forms of communication, media and culture;

Media production skills

The ability to:

1. produce work which demonstrates the effective manipulation of sound, image and/or the written word;
2. utilise effectively relevant technical concepts and theories;
3. utilise a range of research skills, for example research into potential audiences, markets or consumption contexts, as a production tool;
4. produce work showing competence in operational aspects of media production technologies, systems, techniques and professional practices;
5. manage time, personnel and resources effectively, by drawing on planning and organisational skills;
6. produce work which demonstrates an understanding of media forms and structures, audiences and specific communication registers;
7. produce work which is informed by, and contextualised within, relevant theoretical issues and debates.

Creative, innovative and imaginative skills

The ability to:

1. initiate, develop and realise distinctive and creative work within various forms of writing or of aural, visual, audio-visual, sound or other electronic media;
2. experiment, as appropriate, with forms, conventions, languages, techniques and practices;

3. draw upon and bring together ideas from different sources of knowledge and from different academic disciplines;
4. be adaptable, creative and self-reflexive in producing output for a variety of audiences and in a variety of media forms.

General skills

With varying emphasis, graduates in these subject areas will also be able to:

1. work in flexible, creative and independent ways, showing self-discipline, self-direction and reflexivity;
2. gather, organise and deploy ideas and information in order to formulate arguments cogently, and express them effectively in written, oral or in other forms;
3. retrieve and generate information, and evaluate sources, in carrying out independent research;
4. organise and manage supervised, self-directed projects;
5. communicate effectively in inter-personal settings, in writing and in a variety of media;
6. work productively in a group or team, showing abilities at different times to listen, contribute and lead effectively;
7. deliver work to a given length, format, brief and deadline, properly referencing sources and ideas and making use, as appropriate.

Learning and Teaching Strategies

The underlying philosophy of the programme is that the teaching and learning strategy should:

1. help students to achieve intended learning outcomes;
2. suit methods to the development of knowledge, understanding and skills;
3. encourage students to take responsibility for independence in their own learning;
4. provide an appropriate range of, and balance between, learning methods;
5. exploit any work experience, which students will generate;
6. provide alternative learning methods if students have special needs.

Teaching and learning is designed to enable students to achieve intended learning outcomes. These learning outcomes tie in to external reference points, such as relevant subject benchmarks and occupational/professional body standards.

The Programme intends that the learning programme should be both stimulating and demanding, and should lead students through progressive stages of development, towards increasingly complex and open-ended tasks, increasingly

sophisticated application of intellectual/conceptual and personal (transferable) skills, and increasingly independent study.

The general approach to the learning process for most modules is one that involves:

1. lectures;
2. visiting guest lectures;
3. seminars;
4. tutorials (group and individual);
5. master class workshops (with practitioners and instructors);
6. directed study within facility areas (with instructors and technicians);
7. self-directed study.

Students will be involved in three types of learning situation:

1. Contact with the lecturer (supported hours).
2. Study outside class times as directed by the lecturer (directed learning).
3. Study at students' own initiative (independent learning).

Contact hours + directed study hours + independent learning = total study hours.
Total study hours define the Credit Volume for a module (using the formula 1 credit = 10 study hours).

Students can expect a change in the balance of supported, directed and independent learning as a module progresses and certainly at higher Levels of study. The initial balance for a programme of study is expected to be: for a 20 credit module – 50 contact hours, 50 directed study hours, and 100 independent study hours, and other sized modules pro rata.

Developing graduate (transferable) skills, known to be of interest to employers, has been given significant priority, with all modules contributing as key vehicles in the development of these skills.

A variety of methods will be used to teach, including:

- timetabled teaching of skills relevant to Computer Games Design;
- research study sessions;
- critical study sessions;
- portfolio development that students carry out independently;
- self-directed study of module projects;
- professional development and master classes.

The University employs a virtual learning environment (MLE) where students can access lecture notes and engage with staff, other programme students and the

wider University community. The Department uses this resource as a means to communicate and disseminate information.

This programme is open and flexible to cater for students with special needs in terms of the deployment of the curriculum and learning experience. This is to augment the available support from the University's Student Services Department. For example, the programme can support special entry to darkrooms and digital laboratories and adapted enlargers are available to wheelchair users. If appropriate, balance and emphasis on digital and analogue practice within a module can be reviewed and modified to facilitate the best possible learning experience and outcome. This might be appropriate for a student who has difficulty handling chemicals for example.

As a member of the University of Wales, all the University's students have the right to assessment in Welsh, irrespective of whether they have received tuition through the medium of Welsh. In accordance with this policy, arrangements can be made, within an agreed timescale, for assessed programme work, essay papers and scripts to be translated where Welsh-speaking examiners are not available in the department concerned. All such arrangements are subject to any national degree guidance or regulations.

Assessment Strategies

Assessment forms an integral part of the learning process and will keep pace with the delivery of each module. Its purpose is to provide:

1. feedback so that students are able to judge how well they are developing and achieving module learning outcomes, and what they might need to do to improve (formative assessment);
2. a record of results relating to progression through the programme and the achievement of final or intermediate awards of qualifications (summative assessment);
3. testing of all learning outcomes (but not necessarily summatively);
4. confirmation of the standard of achievement measured against external benchmarks;

Summative assessment is guided by the need to measure student achievement in relation to the aims and objectives specified for the programme and the specified learning outcomes of the individual modules.

Summative assessment will take the form of:

1. group critiques;
2. projects;
3. portfolios of work;
4. presentations – verbal and screen based;

5. essays, reports and other forms of written work.

These assessments will make use of:

1. research demonstrated in presentation;
2. research demonstrated within verbal contextualisation;
3. literature review and biographical detail;
4. demonstration of technical and conceptual skills commensurate to the development and realisation of a major photographic project.

The outputs to be assessed will include:

1. the Physical presentation of drawings, animated and interactive works and related research imagery within analogue and digital context;
2. verbal and visual presentation of ideas, research and project development, resource management and professional ambition;
3. final resolved portfolios of work within agreed context;
4. essays and supporting verbal presentations of research and methodology;
5. dissertation and supporting presentation of research and methodology.

Students are given a Project Brief for each summative assessment, which will tell (a) the module title, (b) the assessment title (and number if there are more than one), (c) the module leader, (d) the date on which it is to be submitted, (e) whether it is to be completed individually or by a group, (f) the learning outcomes to be assessed, (g) the form and size of the output required and whether there will be any penalty for under- or over-size; (h) any working information - for example, case study (i) the criteria by which the work will be graded (j) any advice on sources of information, techniques, module content to be used, (k) the means of retrieving a failure. This information is usually in the form of a module handbook at the beginning of the module, though supplementary information might also be given at a module mid point to remind students of summative assessment requirements.

Formative assessment (not formally assessed) is guided by the need to provide students with developmental feedback and will be provided by means of:

1. spoken and written commentary on summative assessments;
2. regular feedback through seminar and tutorial activities;
3. feedback on self-study tasks.

Programme Structure and Requirements, Levels, Modules, Credits and Awards

The table below details the programme structure for standard full-time students.

Level	Modules & Assessment	Progression and Interim Awards
4	<p>All level 04 modules have 20 credit values (10 ECTS credits):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• The World Viewed and Heard• The World Played and Controlled• Games Studies 1• Mapping, Mining, Pitching, Planning• Pleasure Principles and Reward Spectacles• Games Studies 2	<p>CertHE Art & Design: Credit requirements 100 at level 4.</p> <p>Progression: To progress from Level 4 to Level 5 a student would normally be expected to have at least 100 credits at Level 4.</p>
5	<p>All modules have 20 credit values (10 ECTS credits) unless otherwise stated as 40 credit values (20 ECTS credits):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• The Post-Digital Analogue 1 (40)• Games and Animation Studies 1• The Post-Digital Analogue 2 (40)• Games and Animation Studies 2	<p>DipHE Art and Design: Credit requirements 200 at appropriate level (100 at Level 4 and 100 at Level 5).</p> <p>Progression: To progress from Level 5 to Level 6 a student would normally be expected to have a at least 80 credits at Level 5.</p>
6	<p>All modules have 40 credit values (20 ECTS credits):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Paper Production• Dissertation (40 Credits)• Digital Production	<p>Honours Degree: Credit requirements 220 at Level 5 and 6 with not less than 100 at Level 6.</p> <p>Ordinary Degree: 170 credits at Level 5 and 6 with at least 60 credits at Level 6.</p>

Criteria for Admission to the Programme

Validating Body;	The University of Wales
Location:	Caerleon Campus
Application Procedure:	UCAS code: WGF4 (Route A) EGF4 (Route B)
Duration:	Three years full-time. Six years part-time.
Typical Offer:	Applicants are viewed individually on their merits. A typical offer is 240 points and must include two 6 unit or one 12 unit award.
School:	Newport School of Art, Media and Design

Full details of admission procedure can be viewed at:

http://www3.newport.ac.uk/displayPage.aspx?object_id=201&type=PAG

Date at Which the Programme Specification was Written or Revised

October 2009.

Student Contract

All students will be required, as a condition of enrolment, to abide by and submit to the policies, regulations and procedures of the University, as amended from time to time. A copy of all the relevant documents can be found at www.newport.ac.uk or is available, on request, from the University Information Centre.

The University will use all reasonable endeavours to deliver programmes in accordance with the descriptions set out in this programme specification. However, the University does not provide education to UK undergraduates on a commercial basis. It is also very largely dependent upon charitable and public funds, which the University has to manage in a way that is efficient and cost-effective, in the context of the provision of a diverse range of programmes to a large number of students. The University therefore:

1. reserves the right to make variations to the contents or methods of delivery of programmes, to discontinue programmes and to merge or combine programmes, if such action is reasonably considered to be necessary by the University. If the University discontinues any programmes, it will use its reasonable endeavours to provide a suitable alternative programme;
2. cannot accept responsibility and expressly excludes liability, for damage to students' property, transfer of computer viruses to students' equipment or liability for breach of contract.