Programme Specification

BA (Hons) Games Design

School:	Creative Art and Design
Subject area:	Design
Entry from academic year:	2021-22
in the month(s) of:	September
Awarding institution:	York St John University
Teaching institution:	York St John University
Delivery location:	York St John University
Programme/s accredited by:	Not applicable
Exit awards:	Certificate of Higher Education Digital Design Diploma of Higher Education Games Design BA (Ord) Games Design
UCAS code / GTTR / other:	W200
Joint Honours combinations:	Not applicable
QAA subject benchmark statement(s):	Art and Design 2017
Mode/s of study:	Undergraduate periods of study[1] for full time / part time
Language of study:	English
Paired with Foundation Year	No
Study abroad opportunities:	Yes
Placement Year opportunity:	Yes

Introduction and special features

The new BA Games Design programme aims to equip you with specialist knowledge and skills to identify, analyse and solve design communication problems. You will initially explore a variety of design disciplines with experience of team working, inter disciplinary collaboration, and the entrepreneurial skills necessary to succeed and innovate. This intentionally draws upon the creative synergies of the different design awards and provides both physical and theoretical opportunities for you to collaborate from new design perspectives and acquire a range of transferable skills. These skills will enable you to become a more versatile designer so you can adapt to changes in the creative industries.

At *level four* the program is designed to equip all learners with the basic skills and understanding for design practice. You will develop a common design language and develop a foundation of key skills through module deliveries. The whole cohort of design students will undertake a suite of activities that immerse them in both studio and digital practices. These core skills will include areas such as: *drawing, modelling, visual communication, rigging, creative thinking, research methodologies, processes, modelling, animation, presentation* etc.

In the 'Specialist Projects' module you will develop subject knowledge and understanding of Digital design from the perspective of your entry level interest in one of the specialist areas of games, animation or graphic design. The module also gives you the opportunity, via collaborative assignments, to develop

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[1] The standard period of study will apply unless otherwise stated

awareness of how your specialist subject has much in common, with regards to its skill base, with adjacent subject areas in Digital design.

As the module progresses you will have a series of regular feedback tutorials designed to more roundly inform your decision as to which area of digital practice is best suited to your current and future ambitions as you progress into year two of the design programme.

Students specialising in Games Design will focus upon the fundamental design principles and develop knowledge and understanding of theory and practice in the subject discipline. It will introduce you to a range of contexts, for example, such as:

- Developing an interactive user experience
- Consideration of platform limitations
- Time management
- Grey box pre-production phase
- Finalising a stand-alone, bug free distributable build

At *level five* projects will become more technical and design briefs more challenging to allow you to develop your specialist area. In level five, you will engage with a blend of traditional and digital technologies whilst further developing your existing skills acquired in level four. You will focus upon a set of computer-generated applications relevant to your specialism, whilst undertaking a range of both external competitions and client briefs relating to games design.

Students specialising in Games Design will develop knowledge and understanding of theory and practice in the subject discipline. Teaching and learning will be articulated and delivered through a set of generic and specialist module assignments and projects, including for example, study of the following:

- Story and narrative
- Intro to game art - real-time engines
- Interactive environment
- Character Animation
- Interactive Character
- Performance and acting

At *level six* design briefs will be more challenging to allow you to develop in your specialist area. Focus will be on professional practice, working on briefs set by live clients from the industry whom will be involved in giving feedback during assessment. A broad range of designers will give guest lectures to expose you to how the design process actually works on live projects in the industry. Both traditional and computer skills will be progressed further to develop a range of effective techniques for presenting work in both 2D and 3D. You will develop independent learning skills to enable you to work in a professional capacity, which will be evidenced in your 'major project'. Students will leave equipped with knowledge and skills in a variety of design disciplines but also with experience of team working, inter disciplinary collaboration, and the entrepreneurial skills and broader business awareness necessary to survive, succeed and innovate in the creative professions.

Personal and academic support is an integral part of our students' experience and is pivotal to supporting our students to succeed and reach their full potential. The Principles of Personal and Academic Support aim to more explicitly state the University's commitment to the provision of academic and pastoral support; improve the equity and consistency of provision within and across faculties. Therefore, we will provide support for you to succeed as a student. Your personal tutor who is an academic member of staff will be assigned to understand your academic needs and can offer pastoral advice. Your academic tutor will provide a high professional level of support to keep you on track during your time with us.

Where will you progress?

If you are ambitious to have a career in the digital creative industries, the skills that you will acquire on the BA: Games Design course will enable you to work in a variety of visualisation agencies, digital agencies, and graphic design and animation / games studios. There is also an opportunity for any graduate to progress and further their knowledge and understanding of design by undertaking the MA Design programme.

Admissions criteria

You must meet the University's general entry criteria for [undergraduate](#) study. In addition, you will be asked to attend an interview. At interview we will ask you to bring a portfolio of work, which represents examples of completed projects or work in progress and an example of written work.

If your first language is not English, you need to take an IELTS test or an equivalent qualification accepted by the University (see https://www.yorksj.ac.uk/international/how-to-apply/english-language-requirements/).

If you do not have traditional qualifications, you may be eligible for entry on the basis of [Accredited Prior (Experiential) Learning (APL/APEL)](#). We also consider applications for entry with advanced standing.

Programme aim(s)

The programme aims for the BA (Hons) Games Design are:

1. To offer a design education with opportunities to develop distinct specialisms and interdisciplinary design practices.
2. To offer opportunities for acquiring theoretical and practical knowledge in design and related studies e.g. business and enterprise.
3. To encourage the development of professional and practical skills out of critical and experimental approaches.
4. To develop professional teamwork and collaborative design practices.
5. To encourage independence, reflection and flexibility for students to develop a personal approach to their design practice.
6. To identify and provide solutions to address user centred problems in a variety of design disciplines.
7. To adopt a strategy for design intervention that is inclusive, enfranchising all sections of society applying practice in a variety of user centred contexts.
8. To provide for the progressive acquisition of design craft and technological skills both specific and generic to the programme design disciplines.
9. To offer opportunities for professional experience via work-related learning, internships and external collaborative project work.
10. To provide students with a recognised qualification to compete successfully in a diverse and highly competitive employment market or to undertake further study.
11. To ensure understanding of and compliance with health and safety issues in educational and professional environments.
12. To encourage an understanding of design's wider social role and responsibility.
13. To connect to regional, national and international development in the creative industries through continuing liaison and partnerships.
14. To engage in and develop lifelong learning and the promotion of independent learners.
15. To support widening participation in higher education and design practice.
16. To encourage and support creative risk taking, unexpected and imaginative responses.

Programme learning outcomes

Upon successful completion of the programme students will be able to:

Level 4
4.1 Demonstrate proficiency in observation, investigation, enquiry, experimentation, visualisation and making

4.2 Select, evaluate and employ design communication strategies and information technologies

4.3 Source and research relevant material, assimilating and articulating relevant findings into structured and coherent arguments and design propositions

4.4 Experiment and solve problems productively both individually and in teams

4.5 Understand design principles in order to communicate ideas and information in appropriate forms

4.6 Analyse information and experiences, formulate independent judgements, and articulate reasoned arguments through reflection, review and evaluation

4.7 Apply technical knowledge and practical skills in Design

4.8 Develop research and experimentation into design concept proposals

Level 5
5.1 Acquire knowledge and critical understanding of design research in new and emerging contexts

5.2 Illustrate competence in appropriate digital design systems

5.3 Communicate design concepts and research in visual, oral and written forms to diverse audiences

5.4 Develop, organise and present an emerging professional portfolio of design work that includes digital and analogue design processes

5.5 Plan, undertake and critically evaluate work related learning in the context of continuing professional development

5.6 Show the ability to creatively and effectively solve design problems in an entrepreneurial manner

5.7 Conceptualise, experiment, and show creative and technical expertise in games development

5.8 Demonstrate knowledge and critical understanding of games design processes, theories, narratives, aesthetics and industry practices

Level 6
6.1 Show an ability to put personal specialist design skills at the disposal of a client / external agency and critically understand the financial implications

6.2 Evaluate research, methods, problems, concepts and data into arguments and design solutions for complex and unpredictable contexts

6.3 Identify a systematic understanding of operating within professional standards and norms appropriate to games development

6.4 Exercise initiative, critical reflection and personal responsibility in a range of decision-making contexts and identify future professional development

6.5 Assess different approaches to design problem solving and innovation

6.6 Devise, sustain and present an advanced critical commentary on Design

6.7 Conceptualise, experiment and show advanced creative and technical expertise in a diverse range of industry standard games design practices

Programme structure

Code	Level	Semester	Title	Credits	compulsory or optional to take **C or O**	non-compensatable or compensatable **NC or X**
					Module status	
DES4002M	4	1&2	Design Practice - Digital	60	C	NC
DES4004M	4	1	Design Research for the Digital Domain	20	C	X
DES4006M	4	2	Specialist Project - Digital	40	C	NC
DES5004M	5	1	Digital Design Applications	20	C	X
DES5003M	5	1&2	Specialist Studio Practice: Games Design	60	C	NC
DES5010M	5	1	Specialist Studio Practice: Games Design (Student Exchange)	40	C[1]	NC
DES5008M	5	2	Professional Portfolio	20	C	X
DES5009M	5	2	Collaborative Projects	20	C	X
DES6014M	6	1&2	Critical and Contextual Studies (CCS): Independent Research Project	20	C	X
DES6006M	6	1&2	Major Project: Games Design	60	C	NC
DES6005M	6	2	Client Project: Games Design	40	C	NC

[1] students who study abroad in Semester 1 will take DES5010M in Semester 2

Level four provides you with opportunities to develop a broad range of subject knowledge and understanding applicable to your design discipline. This is achieved by undertaking a foundation of core skills through research, communication, graphical representation, processes and theoretical and cultural perspectives based on your studies in both generic and subject specific modules. You will develop an understanding of a common language and develop a foundation of creative skills that emerge in both studio and digital practices.

You will review your specialist pathway (*Games Design*) with the academic tutors at the end of level four and will have the opportunity to transfer to another award (*Animation or Graphics*) if appropriate.

Level five is intended to develop more detailed knowledge and understanding of design methodologies through theory and practice building upon level four. These modules will further your academic study connected with research and practice methods, which introduces new material through areas such as *creative writing*, *character animation*, *interactive processes*, *games engines* etc. Emphasis will be placed on developing your own skills of independent study, personal organisation, time-management and self-reliance.

At *level six* you will take advanced modules in design that will enable you to develop detailed knowledge and critical understanding of your chosen specialism. You will also encounter ideas and debates at the research frontier within games design and further develop your skills through undertaking an independent piece of research to explore innovative ideas through a variety of both practical and theoretical based methods of your choice. You will also continue to develop your skills of analysis and interpretations through participating in client led projects, whilst establishing your own personal identity and style through the 'Major Project'.

Throughout *level six* you will be expected to demonstrate increasing sophistication and critical judgement in your assessments, including the ability to evaluate and critique your own development work. You will also

further enhance your skills in communication, organisation, independent study and time management. Finally, you will be expected to produce a professional portfolio and display an exhibition of your own graduate work.

Level 4 Modules
Design Practice – Digital (60 Credits)
This module covers a variety of aspects involving the use of visual language. You will develop a broad range of visual skills, such as perspective and *orthographic drawing*, *schematic* and *thematic sketching*, rendering, visual communication, animation principles, 3D digital skills, rigging, animation, modelling techniques and understand lighting and compositing techniques. More broadly, the module will conduct lectures and tutorials to address oral communication and presentation techniques in order to equip you to become a more versatile designer.

Design Research and the Digital Domain (20 Credits)
In this module, you will be introduced to the more academic foundations of your discipline and will focus on the research, idea development and argumentation conventions that will inform and expand your practice. You will use these skills to investigate key issues throughout many topics of animation, games development and graphic design. With this understanding, you can begin to be able to make informed judgments about the direction of your work, how it can challenge and progress your discipline in order to be a valuable designer for the future. This module develops learning skills by integrating practice based and core knowledge-based skills with the study of concepts relevant to creative media. You are encouraged to develop a deeper understanding of your identity as a learner within your studies and with the goal of becoming autonomous, self-directed learners.

Specialist Project – Digital (40 Credits)
Students of design need to undertake assignments set in a variety of working situations in order for them to be able to work effectively as an individual with others and to develop knowledge and understanding of emerging technologies and practices in both interdisciplinary and specialist project contexts. This is an opportunity for you to apply your current digital knowledge into both a studio-based individual (part one) and collaborative project (part two). This offers you the potential to work on your own discipline content as well as collectively using interdisciplinary skills working as a core creative team to produce new and innovative outcomes. As a games designer you will develop a specific knowledge and understanding of theory and practice in areas such as *time management*, *pre-production phase*, *interactive user experience,* and *platform limitations* etc.

Level 5 Modules
Digital Design Applications (20 Credits)
This module is designed to equip you with theory and practice of industry standard digital applications for games designers. You will develop the analytical and critical skills associated with software necessary to match the specific needs in the creative industries. You will also develop an awareness of cross plat forming digital applications, such as Virtual Reality, Augmented Realty enabling you to utilise these more effectively when working collaboratively or through interdisciplinary contexts. The module will extend your knowledge about technical processes, including demonstrating the role of a real time artist and the technical aspects of working around hardware limitations and real time techniques. This will enable you to confidently articulate your work and to experiment with a range of digital tools to achieve real and virtual outputs.

Specialist Studio Practice: Games Design (60 Credits)
This module offers you the opportunity to undertake a variety of specialised design work. You will identify design problems, write a design brief, plan for and execute a range of work that is based on research into the sector or topic of choice. This is delivered through a series of projects, including tutor led, client and competition projects. Alternatively, you may propose self-generated design briefs. This module is an ideal vehicle for you to practice and apply your developing digital skills to construct a portfolio of work that articulates both technical competences and your own developing 'voice' in games design. These will form

an evolving practice in 3D and games design studying the following in storytelling, game art, interactive environments, character animation, performing, acting etc.

Specialist Studio Practice: Games Design (Student Exchange) (40 Credits)
Students, who are wishing to study abroad with our International partners during semester 2, will need to undertake this optional module during semester 1 of year 2. This will provide you with sufficient credits to enable you to undertake additional programme related modules abroad in semester 2.

Professional Portfolio (20 Credits)
It is important that students gain some experience of professional practice in industry and commerce particularly as many are ambitious at graduation to start their professional careers in a freelance capacity. The module offers 'preparation' and 'practice' for: A period of work-related learning through the development of a student CV, letter of application, interview techniques and planning. Visiting speakers from a variety of disciplines will be invited to inform you of real-world scenarios. Additionally, you will undertake 'work-based learning' either through a client project or within an appropriate design related environment. Both the 'Careers Department' and programme tutors will support you to secure an appropriate work-related learning placement.

Collaborative Project (20 Credits)
This module will be structured as an intensive collaborative group project requiring you to collaborate across the specialist design awards and also with external "clients" to resolve complex social, spatial, economic or cultural problems through design. Drawing on models such as service and systems design thinking, you will engage in live collaborative research and problem solving, presenting your solutions in an exhibition context. This will enable you to understand the possibilities of interdisciplinary practice, through a range of real and virtual processes. This will provide you with fundamental practical and interpersonal skills referenced to in professional industry practices.

Level 6 Modules
Design Research and Innovation Proposal (20 Credits)
The Design Research and Innovation Proposals module (DRIP) supports the programme aim and aspirations for emerging design graduates to produce 'new and unexpected outcomes' leading to various forms and levels of innovation. Innovative design in a contemporary society requires thinking design practitioners who are able to understand the theoretical, cultural and social structures which underpin design problems and their potential solutions. This module aims to enable this level of thinking for you as a graduating design student.

Major Project: Games Design (60 Credits)
The aim of this module is to enable you as a games designer to execute your graduate design brief. The brief will be researched, proposed, argued and planned for in the adjacent module - Design, Research & Innovation Proposal(s). You are tasked to demonstrate that you are capable of applying skills to identify and overcome problems, present a critical argument to support decision making and apply reasoning and practical skills in order to offer creative and technical solutions to the problem(s). You will aim to make work that contributes toward and embeds discipline-based debate in the contemporary cultural and technological context. The module is a framework that enables you to demonstrate your graduate skills as a games designer and to focus on your plans for continuing professional development.

Client Project: Games Design (40 Credits)
This module enables you to build competences with and produce work that addresses the needs and requirements of clients, competitions and user groups. The context and detailed requirements of the client centred design brief will be established in the adjacent module - Design Research and Innovation Proposal. Work in this, the Client Project module, will therefore extend and address the developmental, technical and presentational resolution aspects of the client-centred brief. Therefore, you will be expected to research and negotiate a games design brief with a client and in so doing establish your credentials as an autonomous independent practitioner. The programme is well connected to a variety of designers and studios around the local and national region, providing you with the opportunities to engage with projects

that have 'real world' experiences. You will engage in 'live' project(s) in liaison with our industry partners helping to prepare you in a broad range of practices for further employment opportunities.

Learning, teaching and assessment

The programme has been designed to meet the needs of those of you who wish to undertake a degree in a broad range of design related activities and those of you returning to education. Programme delivery will utilise a blended approach incorporating tutor led sessions, group work and individual tutorials, technical support and learning reinforced by virtual learning environments (VLEs).

The programme is concerned with ensuring that you have the opportunity to experience a variety of teaching and learning strategies across the modules offered. These are structured to facilitate successful achievement of the learning outcomes of each module.

You will be provided with a range of teaching and learning strategies across the modules, including:

- Reflective learning
- Independent learning
- Collaborative learning
- Facilitated learning

This process will be achieved through the use of a range of teaching and learning methods, including workshops, field visits, work related learning, seminar discussions, and supervised projects and supported VLE learning. It is anticipated that semesters will be divided between periods of intense activity (in practice-based activity) and periods of independent reflection, supported by specific tasks, technical workshops, reading and proactive use of VLE (including forums, discussion groups, online portfolios, project briefs). You will not be expected to undertake any examinations whilst on the degree.

Students will receive technical supervision through a variety of different workshops to help support your academic project work. Technicians are responsible in providing support for workshops, technical demonstrations and ensuring adequate provision of materials and equipment are provided.

This process will be achieved by the use of a wide and varied range of teaching methods, including:

- Lectures
- Demonstrations
- Seminars
- Individual and group tutorials
- Group and individual presentations
- Visiting speakers/lecturers
- Use of audio-visual material
- Use of e-learning
- Use of appropriate IT
- Workshops
- Technical support

The programme recognises that, as a higher education student, you need to gain and develop a range of graduate attributes which is why the programme places a significant emphasis on your independent learning. The programme thus aims to provide an environment in which you are encouraged to take responsibility for your role in managing your learning and outcomes.

The programme will be seeking application from individuals from a variety of art and design, media, IT and other creative backgrounds and will actively seek to foster modes of group/team learning, in which knowledge, skills, and practical and critical experience can be shared and exchanged.

Reflection is central to learning on this degree. It encourages you to relate new material you may encounter to your existing knowledge and expertise. In addition to being a part of good quality knowledge transfer, reflection supports learning by enhancing the whole experience. The new programme will offer you the

time to reflect through a variety of ways; such as learning journals, formative feedback, the use of portfolios, reflection on work related learning and internships, tutorial interaction, peer and self-assessment, assignments and a review of your own continual professional development (CPD) plan. It will also facilitate an understanding of your own learning processes and their relationship with and to other creative industries.

Project feedback will be undertaken at timely points to enable effective progression into the next project, usually at the same time as a portfolio review to enable ongoing holistic assessment. A personal design and learning portfolio is key to the reflective CPD process and the programme will offer a system for developing a professional design portfolio which will record both the process and outcomes of your design projects, and also enable you to record other professionally relevant achievements and competences. This portfolio will be reviewed regularly, usually three or four times per semester to track progress and aid with setting objectives for future projects. This will be timed to coincide with appropriate stages in projects and modules. This will also be used particularly to provide context for your specialism decisions at the end of level four and also to guide the independent project choices for level six. The portfolio review will be integrated into the academic tutorial system to provide coherent personal learning support for all design students. Summative feedback, reflecting the formative feedback stages and portfolio reviews, will be communicated within 3 weeks of final submission at the end of a module.

You will be encouraged to recognise your learning is not confined to formal teaching situations and encouraged to undertake independent preparation as a follow up to your formal teaching sessions. The programme seeks to offer a range of technical support and independent study that might include both theory and practical sessions. The Technology Enhanced Learning (TEL) team support staff in using some of the core online student services, such as Moodle (VLE) and Mahara (e-portfolio), which you can openly access as part of your online learning experience.

VLE
Full use will be made of VLEs as a central part of the programme's Learning and Teaching strategy. VLEs are to be used not just as a means to access programme information and module handbooks but in terms of the full learning and teaching possibilities which they offer.

For example:

- Discussion forums
- On-line archiving of student work and documentations
- Opportunity to host public journals (Mahara)

Progression and graduation requirements

The University's general regulations for undergraduate awards apply to this programme.

Any modules that must be passed for progression or award are indicated in the Programme Structure section as non-compensatable.

Internal and external reference points

This programme specification was formulated with reference to:
- University Mission Statement [see page two]
- Strategic Plan 2015-20 [see page four]
- QAA subject benchmark statement
- Framework for Higher Education Qualifications

Date written / revised: 12/02/19
Programme originally approved: 08/04/16