

Programme Specification

Award and title: BA (Hons) Games Design

<i>School:</i>	School of the Arts
<i>Subject area:</i>	Design
<i>Entry from academic year:</i>	2023-24
<i>in the month(s) of</i>	September
<i>Awarding institution:</i>	York St John University
<i>Teaching institution:</i>	York St John University
<i>Delivery location:</i>	York St John University
<i>Programme/s accredited by:</i>	Not applicable
<i>Exit awards:</i>	Certificate of Higher Education Games Design Diploma of Higher Education Games Design BA (Ord) Games Design
<i>UCAS code / GTTR / other:</i>	
<i>Joint Honours combinations:</i>	
<i>QAA subject benchmark statement(s):</i>	Art and Design 2019 https://www.qaa.ac.uk/docs/qaa/subject-benchmark-statements/sbs-art-and-design-17.pdf?sfvrsn=71eef781_22
<i>Mode/s of study:</i>	Undergraduate periods of study ¹ for full time
<i>Language of study:</i>	English
<i>Paired with Foundation Year</i>	No
<i>Study abroad opportunities:</i>	Yes
<i>Opt-in YSJU Placement Year opportunity:</i>	Yes

Introduction and special features

Games Design at York St. John University offers a broad study of games, with a unique selling point of specifically focusing on the study and practical application of Game and Level Design, taught by industry experts in small cohorts. This increased focus on Game Design allows for concentrated expertise in this sought-after area of game development. Key topics include game and level design, indie design, concepting, narrative design, Virtual Reality design and a thorough grounding in the core industry utilised game engines, including usability and playability testing to understand the concepts underpinning games production and the business of marketing your game. In addition, you will develop the necessary skills in game analysis to inform your design choices, exploring game design in the context of society and culture.

Team-based projects involving regular critique sessions with your peers and members of our games team are designed to help you develop the high-level of team working and communication skills that are vital in the games industry, embedding many transferable skills, such as collaboration, presentation techniques, and problem solving.

External engagement from industry professionals is a key element of the course, delivering studio talks and offering workshops on specialist features of their research and practice. The Games Design programme is

¹ The standard period of study will apply unless otherwise stated

a member of *Game Republic* which is a national network for games designers, offering support and advice alongside annual showcase opportunities for students.

Our hands-on, practical approach aims to encourage and support you to develop a high-quality portfolio of work that will demonstrate your skills and creativity to potential employers through playable, game-based examples.

Admissions criteria

You must meet the minimum entry requirements which are published on the programme specific webpage. In addition, you must have:

- Portfolio of creative work
- Attend a course specific interview

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 [Recognition of prior learning \(RPL\)](#). We also consider applications for entry with advanced standing.

Programme aim(s)

The aims of the programme are to:

- Provide a specialised and personalised education in game development from industry and academic experts, with emphasis on game design and practical implementation.
- Utilise a variety of cutting-edge technologies to produce innovative, creative, and playable game artefacts.
- Provide the skills and knowledge necessary to pursue a successful career in the entertainment and leisure-based software industries.
- Provide the skills to research and analyse games allowing application of critical, analytical, and reflective approaches to games design practice.

Programme learning outcomes

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

Level 4

PLO 4.1

Demonstrate awareness of the practical and contextual understanding of Games Design

PLO 4.2

Demonstrate judgement and self-critique in the development of initial ideas through to final outcomes

PLO 4.3

Demonstrate understanding and application of the design process including: interpretation, observation, investigation, enquiry, ideation, experimentation, production and evaluation

PLO 4.4

Communicate and present their study/work clearly, accurately, and reliably, and with structured and coherent arguments

PLO 4.5

Evaluate the appropriateness of different approaches to solving problems related to their area(s) of study and/or work

PLO 4.6

Identify and engage with relevant academic literature to inform understanding.

Level 5

PLO 5.1

Demonstrate knowledge and critical understanding of the established principles of Games Design

PLO 5.2

Define and apply underlying concepts and principles outside the context in which they were first studied, including, where appropriate, situating your practice in a professional context

PLO 5.3

Construct and apply knowledge of the fundamental methods of enquiry in Games Design, and ability to evaluate critically the appropriateness of different approaches to solving problems

PLO 5.4

Interact effectively with others, for example, through collaboration, collective endeavour and negotiation

PLO 5.5

Construct convincing ideas, concepts, proposals, solutions or arguments independently and/or collaboratively as self-initiated activity and/or in response to diverse set briefs

PLO 5.6

Source, evaluate, and analyse relevant academic literature to inform understanding.

Level 6

PLO 6.1

Demonstrate an independent and critical understanding of the profession of Games Design including an awareness of the professional and contextual location of their emerging practice

PLO 6.2

Evidence the synthesis of their knowledge and understanding informed by research, practice, and theory in their discipline(s), including: the critical, contextual, historical, conceptual, economic, social, environmental and ethical dimensions of their emerging practice

PLO 6.3

Critically evaluate and analyse information, experiences, arguments, assumptions, abstract concepts and data, to make judgements, and to frame appropriate questions to achieve a solution - or identify a range of solutions - to a problem

PLO 6.4

Professionally and appropriately communicate and present complex information, ideas, problems and solutions to both specialist and non-specialist audiences

PLO 6.5

Exercise self-management skills in managing workloads and meeting deadlines whilst accommodating change and uncertainty

PLO 6.6

Construct relevant research methods and methodologies, and present fluent oral and written communication that adheres to academic conventions.

Programme structure

Code	Level	Semester	Title	Credits	Module status	
					Compulsory (C) or optional (O)	non-compensatable (NC) or compensatable (X)
DES4020M	4	1	Context of Practice	20	C	X
DES4011M	4	1	Game Design Principles	20	C	X
DES4009M	4	1	Design Process	20	C	X
DES4016M	4	2	Game Design Practice 1	60	C	NC
DES5016M	5	1	Critical & Contextual Studies 1	20	C	X
DES5017M	5	1	Personal & Professional Practice 1	20	C	X
DES5018M	5	1	Collaborative Practice	20	C	X
DES5020M	5	2	Game Design Practice 2	60	C	NC
DES6015M	6	1&2	Critical & Contextual Studies 2	20	C	X
DES6016M	6	1	Personal & Professional Practice 2	40	C	NC
DES6018M	6	1&2	Games Design: Major Project	60	C	NC

Any modules that must be passed for progression or award are indicated in the table above as non-compensatable. A non-compensatable module is one that must be passed at the relevant level (with a mark of 40) in order to progress.

Learning, teaching and assessment

The programme is divided into three distinct, but related phases of learning. This begins at level 4. At this level you will be introduced to the fundamental principles in Games Design via short, engaging projects which foster visual literacy and critical awareness. You will also learn how contexts of practice and theory exist together by examining key principles, methods, and techniques, both practical and digital. The programme will encourage and support you to evaluate, interpret, argue, and present to relevant audiences undertaken in an open minded, experimental, and individual way.

Formative feedback and feed forward are embedded throughout the programme, ensuring you are supported to develop and evolve your individualised emerging Games Design practice. Feed forward will encourage you to reflect on tutor and peer insights to enhance and apply directly to concurrent and subsequent modules and briefs. This will prepare you for formative and summative assessment.

In level 5 you will apply, critically evaluate, and analyse by communicating to specialist and non-specialist audiences. You are encouraged to do this through diverse and complex projects, either with a live client presented by industry professionals, or by undertaking professional competition briefs. A further option to study abroad for one semester is also available to you, should you choose, with a carefully partnered institution.

In level 6, you will undertake an autonomous approach to your studies, through the identification of self-initiated briefs and projects, supervised by academics and industry professionals. You will independently apply knowledge and skills specific to your interests and insights to develop a professional portfolio. This is further strengthened by theoretical writing and the presentation of your work to an external audience.

You will have access to academic writing support throughout the programme.

Module content is delivered through a blend of briefings, lectures, and seminars.

Module briefings introduce and explain the aims, objectives and rationale for the module, enabling you to understand the overarching context for each module.

Regular briefings communicate key information at various points within a module. Key information may include: progress updates, preparation for timetabled sessions, live and/or competition brief opportunities, and exhibitions.

Lectures introduce you to the core themes, theories, principles and contextual information relating to the module content.

Seminars provide the opportunity in small groups to discuss ideas and concepts relating to module content. Seminars will enable you to develop a deeper understanding of module content.

Assessment types and methods inform and support your individual progress on the programme. The assessment methods within each module reflect creative and academic practice ensuring authentic professional formats are applied consistently. These methods include portfolio submissions and presentations. Your portfolio submissions will be assessed holistically, enabling you to demonstrate your emerging practice effectively within the context of the module aims and learning outcomes.

Group and peer critiques will provide ongoing formative feedback alongside individual tutorials to support your approach to each module and facilitate an increasingly independent approach to your studies.

You will graduate from York St John with distinct interdisciplinary, entrepreneurial knowledge and skills.

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 and values](#)
- [University 2026 Strategy](#)
- [QAA subject benchmark statements](#)
- [Frameworks for Higher Education Qualifications](#)

Date written / revised:

Programme originally approved: