

COURSE SPECIFICATION - BA (Hons) Games Art



1. General information

Course Title	Games Art
UCAS code	W280
Course / Award Title	BA (Hons)
Awarding Institution	Leeds Arts University
Institution at which course is delivered	Leeds Arts University
Professional Accreditation (if applicable)	N/A
Relevant QAA Benchmark(s)	Art & Design (2019)

Awards	Credits	Duration	Mode of study
BA (Hons) Games Art	360 (180 ECTS)	3 years	FT
BA Games Art*	300 (150 ECTS)	3 years	FT
DipHE in Games Art*	240 (120 ECTS)	2 years	FT
CertHE in Games Art*	120 (60 ECTS)	1 year	FT
*Exit award only			

2. Course Aims

This course aims to provide you with:

- A stimulating and challenging learning environment, mirroring aspects of video game production
- The opportunity to develop practical and conceptual skills in game art, covering a range of outputs and styles
- An understanding of critical, analytical, and reflective methods within the realm of game art practice, with a particular emphasis on enhancing the visual communication of video game design
- An understanding of the game artist's role in the local and global video game industry through ongoing engagement with industry experts and studios
- Access to relevant tools, technology, and resources to foster creativity, innovation, and practical skill development in the creation of video games
- An understanding of the ethical principles of games art for video games, with a focus on issues like representation, diversity, and player experience
- The opportunity to develop the intellectual and practical skills to support employability, preparing you to manage workloads, meet deadlines, and to be able to work effectively as part of a team.
- The opportunity to create individual and collaborative projects to develop a relevant video game art practice

3. Distinctive Features

Distinctive features of the course:

The Leeds Arts University Games Art course's distinctiveness lies in its creative and academic balance, its location within a vibrant arts university, its collaborative opportunities with cognate courses, and relevant resources. This course prepares graduates to excel in the dynamic world of game art.

Collaboration is an important aspect of the course design, fostering an environment where students can work with their peers through structured briefs. This not only helps stimulate industry practices but also elevates the quality of the student's creative work through collaborative learning.

Students will have the opportunity to collaborate not only with game designers but also with peers from various disciplines within our institution, including animation, music production, and creative writing. This interdisciplinary synergy opens doors to a multitude of creative perspectives, enriching problem-solving abilities and broadening creative horizons.

This dynamic collaboration extends further, providing students with access to accomplished creatives and industry speakers from adjacent fields. They will gain valuable insights and inspiration from professionals working outside the traditional boundaries of game art education. There will be the opportunity to engage with writers, graphic designers, and 3D filmmakers, made possible by Leeds Arts University's inclusive ethos and diverse course offerings.

The result is a dynamic melting pot of ideas and techniques, fostering a unique and organically evolving student practice, a place where creativity and innovation thrive, and students are encouraged to push the boundaries of their creative endeavours.

The course has strong links with industry, local and international video game studios, artists, designers, and other professionals involved in the video game development pipeline, including membership to relevant games industry trade and employability organisations.

4. Course Structure

4a. Module Framework

Level 4	Credit Points	ECTS	Learning Hours
LAUGAMA401 - Fundamentals	20	10	200
LAUGAMA402 - Pre-production	40	20	400
LAUGAMA403 - Progression	60	30	600
Level 5	Credit Points	ECTS	Learning Hours
LAUGAMA501 - Experiment	60	30	600
LAUGAMA502 - Production	60	30	600
Level 6	Credit Points	ECTS	Learning Hours
LAUGAMA601 - Synergy	60	30	600
LAUGAMA602 - Specialisation	60	30	600

4b. Course Map / Structure

Level 4	
Semester One	Fundamentals (LAUGAMA401) 20 credits
Semester One	Pre-production (LAUGAMA402) 40 Credits
Semester Two	Progression (LAUGAMA403) 60 credits
120 credits (60 ECTS credits)	
Certificate of Higher Education (Exit Award)	

Level 5	
Semester One	Experiment (LAUGAMA501) 60 credits
Semester Two	Production (LAUGAMA502) 60 credits
120 credits (60 ECTS credits)	
Diploma of Higher Education (Exit Award)	

Level 6	
Semester One	Synergy (LAUGAMA601) 60 credits
Semester Two	Specialisation (LAUGAMA602) 60 credits
120 credits (60 ECTS credits)	
BA (Hons) Games Art (Exit Award)	
*Students who fail to complete 360 credits but have accumulated no fewer than 300 credits will be awarded an Ordinary degree.	

5. Course Learning Outcomes

Learning is assessed at each level of the course. This develops from introductory work within the specialism of the course at level 4, through the development of skills and ideas at level 5, progressing to application and synthesis of skills, originality, and theory in practice at level 6 as indicated by the FHEQ qualification descriptors.

Course Learning Outcomes (CLOs) comprise the Level Learning Outcomes, which define what you are expected to be able to do on completion of each level. Level Learning Outcomes are achieved through successfully completing all modules at that level. Expectations for your learning are expressed within each module.

Level 4 (CertHE)

Level Learning Outcomes	Modules
<i>By the end of Level 4, you will be expected to:</i>	
4.1 Identify a solid grasp of fundamental principles relevant to game design, and the ability to recognise them within the context of the field.	LAUGAMA401 LAUGAMA402
4.2 Identify and communicate elements in the design of a game, relevant to the fulfilment of a brief.	LAUGAMA402 LAUGAMA403
4.3 Outline arguments that align with fundamental theories and concepts within game design.	LAUGAMA401 LAUGAMA402

4.4 Reflect on your experiences and learning journey, identifying actions to propel your practice forward.	LAUGAMA401 LAUGAMA402 LAUGAMA403
4.5 Relate to various sources of technical and theoretical information within the realm of game design.	LAUGAMA402 LAUGAMA403
4.6 Demonstrate a practical and technical understanding of a range of approaches to the creation of a game idea, both in prototype form and through the planning of a game design document.	LAUGAMA402 LAUGAMA403
4.7 Demonstrate an awareness of presentation techniques regarding your development and portfolio work.	LAUGAMA401 LAUGAMA402 LAUGAMA403
4.8 Identify effective project management techniques to assist with deadlines and workload.	LAUGAMA403

Level 5 (DipHE)

Level Learning Outcomes	Modules
<i>By the end of Level 5, you will be expected to:</i>	
5.1 Compare and contrast the evolving techniques of game art creation and how they relate to the concepts and theories that underpin the subject area.	LAUGAMA501
5.2 Demonstrate an understanding of effective collaboration in a group development setting	LAUGAMA502
5.3 Generate ideas, concepts and solutions for game art demonstrating a growing awareness of industry trends, in response to set challenges.	LAUGAMA501 LAUGAMA502
5.4 Recognise the limits of your knowledge as you attempt to work with conceptual and technical challenges regarding the creation of game art.	LAUGAMA501 LAUGAMA502
5.5 Advance your capacity for self-directed research regarding the cultivation of skills relevant to game art.	LAUGAMA501
5.6 Communicate ideas, informed perspectives, solutions, and research findings.	LAUGAMA501 LAUGAMA502
5.7 Explore and apply methods of self-organisation and project planning that are commonplace in the video game industry.	LAUGAMA502

Level 6 (BA Hons)

Level Learning Outcomes	Modules
<i>By the end of Level 6, you will be expected to:</i>	
6.1 Develop a systematic understanding of game art, including coherent and detailed knowledge informed by the latest developments in the field.	LAUGAMA601 LAUGAMA602
6.2 Formulate your learning and development in the field of game art through your engagement with the industry.	LAUGAMA602
6.3 Assess challenges and revise strategic thinking in the creation of game art, leading to innovative and practical solutions.	LAUGAMA601 LAUGAMA602

6.4 Recognise the boundaries of your knowledge and creative practice inherent to the creation of game art in an industry context.	LAUGAMA601 LAUGAMA602
6.5 Select, experiment with, and master relevant materials, processes, and technology in the field of game art, ensuring high-quality standards.	LAUGAMA602
6.6 Consider inventive, forward-thinking approaches within the dynamic and uncertain landscape of game art.	LAUGAMA601 LAUGAMA602
6.7 Justify critical judgement and self-critique in your game art projects.	LAUGAMA601 LAUGAMA602
6.8 Develop self-reliance by effectively researching, analysing, synthesising, and accurately communicating information from diverse sources.	LAUGAMA601 LAUGAMA602
6.9 Have evaluated and refined communication skills within collaborative and individual contexts while fulfilling roles and responsibilities.	LAUGAMA601 LAUGAMA602

6. Teaching, Learning and Assessment Strategies

Our overall approach to engagement is outlined in our statement on [Higher Education teaching & learning at Leeds Arts University](#).

6a. Teaching and Learning

Level 4

In LAUGAMA401 you will be introduced to the fundamentals of the discipline in both practical and theoretical aspects, cultivating a foundational understanding of its principles. Practical workshops will introduce new technical fundamental techniques used in game art creation.

Later in the semester, in LAUGAMA402, Pre-production, there will be a focus on the theoretical, exploring narrative and how game visuals are developed. You will be encouraged to develop your understanding of concept art techniques to explore ideas quickly. This may involve drawing, painting, or any number of techniques useful in visualising ideas quickly so they can be explored through the medium of game art. These skills will be encouraged at various stages during the course as you explore your ideas for game art in the stages of pre-production. You will depend on your insight into the historical, contemporary, contextual, and employability-related insights of Game Art, and explore these aspects through a written assignment. Lectures and seminars will provide insights into various aspects of game art development, fostering an understanding of game art and its place in the production pipeline.

In LAUGAMA403, Progression, you will delve further into the technical workflows that form the core workflow of a game artist. You will expand upon the initial skill set from semester 1 by applying these techniques within the context of various facets that make up the role of game art, such as character, prop and environment art. Practical workshops may assist you in acquiring an understanding of new techniques such as sculpting, materials, lighting, and composition in a game engine. Lectures may be used to help reflect upon your practice and frame these new techniques within the context of game development. Engagement with these aspects at level 4 supports you in readiness at level 5 when you start to research emerging or contemporary areas of game art development.

You will start to develop your critical thinking skills further by exploring some of these theoretical elements presented to you in lectures via a written assignment. You will be able to explore an argument with support through seminars and workshops and demonstrate this through the assignment.

Level 5

In Level 5 you will begin with LAUGAMA501 - Experiment, pursuing contemporary and emerging areas of game art, and then progressing on to a production scenario which will involve collaboration with your peers. In Semester 1, you will be actively encouraged to explore some of the newly emerging techniques that are developing in the field of game art. This exploration may include researching through various channels such as artists' feeds, festivals, and online talks to stay abreast of the latest trends.

The semester involves a written assignment where attention is directed towards writing about these emerging processes or novel aspects that you are exploring, keeping it as relevant as possible to your individual development. You will explore ethical considerations such as sustainability, inclusivity, diversity, or the societal impact of video games.

Moving into Semester 2, LAUGAMA502 - Production, students are encouraged to navigate the creation of game art within a 'soft' production scenario, with the course providing a specific brief for guidance. Collaboration will take the form of working as part of a team to resolve the provided brief. This will include discussion with the team on how to answer the brief and figure out your collective and individual responses. Briefs are structured to guide students in the creation of artwork for a game prototype within a simulated production environment, readying the students for more freedom in the level 6 studio development module.

During this phase you will be introduced to project management processes and tools via workshops and seminars, offering a practical understanding of how these elements function in a setting that aim to promote specific employability skills. You will be encouraged to work with other game artists and designers and encouraged to explore different roles within the team to gain a better understanding of the production workflow.

Level 6

Level 6 is designed so that you can narrow down your focus on what aspects of game art creation interest you the most. This can then be fully explored in the context of a live project through the studio development aspect of semester one. Semester two allows you to focus even further and work towards building an industry-facing body of work. There will be a priority on you developing more autonomy at level 6, through both modules, with feedback and tutorials aimed at fostering independence and ownership of your learning.

Semester one provides a platform for artists to collaborate with other artists and designers in crafting a group-negotiated response to a brief. You may choose to work with your fellow course peers; however, this module is also open to you entering external briefs and competitions or coordinating your response with peers outside of the course, whether that be internal to the university or working in industry. The aim is to foster a dynamic atmosphere that imitates aspects of a real-world production and encourages skills related to wider employability. Seminars will be focused on how to overcome production-related issues that may arise. Furthermore, artists are encouraged to negotiate the brief based on their emerging individual preferences, allowing them to leverage the knowledge acquired in previous modules and focus on preferred areas of game art creation.

The module encompasses a written assignment, allowing you to explore topics relevant to your practice or chosen area within the games industry, underpinning a theoretical dimension to your work. You may explore an emerging aspect of your workflow that interests you or it could be further exploration into aspects of ethics and sustainability regarding video games.

Moving into LAUGAMA602, you will engage in self-negotiated briefs. This self-directed approach encourages autonomy and the application of specialised knowledge, providing a platform for you to refine your artistic identity within the context of game art. Content related to employability and talks with industry professionals will take place in the form of lectures and seminars. The output

for this semester comprises a portfolio, and a Visual Development Document, highlighting the culmination of students' independent exploration and mastery of game art processes and techniques. A major aspect of this module is about pushing your presentation skills in a range of ways, such as CV creation, cover letters, online presence, interview techniques, and pitch presentations.

6b. Assessment

The aim of assessment is to inform you of your individual progress as you work through the course. Feedback is an essential element of assessment and is explained in more detail in 6c. Assessment also ensures that you are meeting the required academic standards for the award.

Assessment reflects the teaching and learning content and is an integral part of the learning process. Specific assessment strategies and submission requirements are explained in the briefs that you will receive at the start of each module. Assessment is designed to reflect creative and academic practice and is aligned with the appropriate level of study. As far as possible, assessment will be authentic in simulating professional practices that support skills related to employability.

Your creative output, therefore, is the application of your learning and will demonstrate the extent to which you have learned, developed, assimilated, and mediated your knowledge, understanding and skills into appropriate forms for submission requirements. You will evidence module expectations, as expressed as 'what you are expected to learn' in module specifications.

The assessment of the modules is holistic; all material presented for assessment in each module is taken as a whole and a single mark is arrived at. Most assessment is by portfolio submission, the exact nature and content of which is determined by the subject matter, content and learning expectations for each module and is specified in your module briefs.

Your work will be assessed holistically according to the undergraduate Assessment Criteria and Marking Scheme. These criteria are used to evaluate your learning against the learning expectations specified for each module. Levels are clearly differentiated by learning outcomes, module expectations, teaching and learning approaches and assessment design.

6c. Feedback

Tutors will provide feedback, both in support of your ongoing development, as well as in direct response to your work formally within assessment contexts.

Provision of ongoing feedback - defined as information communicated to students with the intention of improving learning - is a significant and distinctive strength of the course. It is demonstrated through frequent and ongoing discussions between staff and students.

Feedback is an essential element of the Games Art course. Throughout the course, students are expected to actively engage with and respond to feedback, which serves as a catalyst for creative development.

In this course, formative progress reviews are conducted at key junctures, providing written feedback on various assessment criteria. Summative feedback at the end of each module assesses overall performance and engagement in the context of Game Art studies.

Formative

You will receive formative feedback on your progress throughout the module in a number of ways. You will partake in ongoing evaluation within the teaching and learning on the course, developing skills in reflection and dialogue, and receiving ongoing formative feedback from the teaching staff and peers. All the modules on this course contain formal formative feedback sessions where you will receive feedback on your progress to meet this developmental aim.

Examples of formative feedback include (without being limited to):

- Peer Reviews
- Group Tutorials
- Individual Progress Tutorials

Summative

At the end of the module, you will receive summative feedback represented by a grade with tutor comments on your work. This feedback will help you to understand how you performed on the module, clarify your strengths, and identify areas for further consideration.