Programme specification

(Notes on how to complete this template are provide in Annexe 3)

1. Overview/ factual information

Programme/award title(s)	Foundation Degree in Game Art, Design and Development
Teaching Institution	Belfast Metropolitan College
Awarding Institution	The Open University (OU)
Date of first OU validation	13th March 2024
Date of latest OU (re)validation	N/A
Next revalidation	13th March 2029
Credit points for the award	240 points
UCAS Code	
HECoS Code	
LDCS Code (FE Colleges)	
Programme start date and cycle of starts if appropriate.	September 2024
Underpinning QAA subject benchmark(s)	QAA Subject Benchmark statements for Communications, media, film & Cultural Studies (2024)
Other external and internal reference points used to inform programme outcomes. For apprenticeships, the standard or framework against which it will be delivered.	
Professional/statutory recognition	
For apprenticeships fully or partially integrated Assessment.	
Mode(s) of Study (PT, FT, DL, Mix of DL & Face-to-Face) Apprenticeship	Full time - Face to Face
Duration of the programme for each mode of study	Full time- 2 years
Dual accreditation (if applicable)	
Date of production/revision of this specification	24/4/2024

Please note: This specification provides a concise summary of the key features of the programme and the learning outcomes that a typical student might be expected to achieve and demonstrate if s/he takes full advantage of the learning opportunities that are provided.

More detailed information on the learning outcomes, content, and teaching, learning and assessment methods of each module can be found in student module guide(s) and the students handbook.

The accuracy of the information contained in this document is reviewed by the University and may be verified by the Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education.

Educational aims and objectives

The proposed rationale of the programme is to:

1. Equip Learners with the skills and knowledge relevant for employment in the Gaming Industry. With an emphasis on Game Art, Design, and Development, the course aims to instil capabilities in game design, asset and environment creation, game animation, and game mechanics within a rapidly progressing sector that addresses both traditional and emerging game development methods.
2. To support the participation of learners from a range of disciplines to equip them with the knowledge and skills to enter employment where data is used to shape organisational growth and sustainability.
3. To provide a sustainable pipeline of new talent for employers currently experiencing skills deficit in the ever growing areas of Game Art, Game Design and Game Development.
4. To provide an opportunity for learners to progress to a range of bachelor's degree (Hons) programmes.
5. To provide an opportunity for learners to experience and apply the knowledge and transferable skills in the workplace.

Target Audience:

The target audience is learners who have recently completed BTEC Level 3 Extended Diplomas, A Levels or equivalent.

These learners may wish to undertake a programme of study that combines Game Art, Game Design and Game Development. The learners will learn all these skills in a subject area that they enjoy.

Structure:

- The FD in Game Art, Design and Development will be structured in a way that supports transfer of academic knowledge and understanding and that this integrates with and supports the development of, vocational skills and competencies, whilst ensuring academic rigour.

- The structure of the Programme will take account of external reference points such as Frameworks for Higher Educational Qualifications, Professional Body accreditation schemes.

- The programme will ensure that the Work Based Learning (WBL) is relevant and contextualised within the scope of the employer's need in this area to promote and ensure the availability of a pipeline of talent. WBL will also be structured to support the enhancement of relevant transferable skills needed for employment in this sector. Cognisance will also be given to ensuring the Programme is representing opportunities for employment across small and medium sized enterprises and self-employment.

- WBL will be supported to enable learners to take on an appropriate role(s) within the workplace, giving them the opportunity to learn and apply the skills and knowledge they have acquired as an integrated element of the course. Whilst WBL will be supported and encouraged through a range of media including part time work, integrated work placements and real work environments, it will be defined clearly within the context where the WBL should lead to the identification and achievement of defined and related learning outcomes for the learner.

- The structure of the FD in Game Art, Design and Development will have at its core, an integrated approach to demonstration of characteristics that include employer involvement; accessibility; articulation and progression, flexibility and partnerships with industry.

- The learners will take part in extracurricular competitions/initiatives outside of the classroom including those offered by Epic Games and The Rookies, as well as those through Northern Ireland Screen/Department for the Economy.

Progression Pathways

It is felt the FD in Game Art, Design and Development provides learners with options for progression to a range of other providers/courses.

At Level 4 learners will undertake four compulsory modules:

- Assets 1
- Pipeline 1
- Assets 2
- Pipeline 2

At level 5 learners will undertake four compulsory modules:

- Assets 3
- Pipeline 3
- Advanced Production Techniques
- Work Based Learning

Upon successful completion of Level 4 and Level 5 modules, students will have attained the following:

- Certificate in Higher Education in Game Art, Design and Development (Level 4)
- Foundation Degree in Game Art, Design and Development (Level 5)

The programme will prepare learners to work in many creative industries covering a wide range of jobs within the Gaming, Virtual Production and potentially Animation sectors.

2.4 List of all exit awards

Certificate in Higher Education (Cert HE) upon successful completion of 120 credits at Level 4.

Foundation Degree (FD) upon successful completion of 240 credits at Level 5.

3. Programme structure and learning outcomes

(The structure for any part-time delivery should be presented separately in this section.)

Programme Structure - LEVEL 4

Compulsory modules	Credit points	Optional modules	Credit points	Is module compensatable?	Year/Semester runs in
Assets 1	30			No	1/1
Pipeline 1	30			No	1/1
Assets 2	30			No	1/2
Pipeline 2	30			No	1/2

Intended learning outcomes at Level 4 are listed below:

Learning Outcomes – LEVEL 4	
3A. Knowledge and understanding	
Learning outcomes:	**Learning and teaching strategy/ assessment methods**
A1: Identify and demonstrate knowledge of key theories, concepts, and principles of digital content creation specifically tailored for the Game Art, Design, and Development industry. A2: Understand and articulate the impact of emerging technologies and developments in the gaming industry, including their influence on game design, development, and player experience. A3: Exhibit an understanding of the social, cultural, ethical, and legal considerations in game development, along with an awareness of environmental sustainability practices within the industry. A4: Demonstrate comprehensive knowledge of project planning, management, and implementation processes specific to game development projects, including team collaboration and agile methodologies.	• Teaching and Learning Methods: Lectures, tutor directed tutorials, supervised practical sessions, student led seminars and use of the College's Virtual Learning Environment. • Assessment Methods: Coursework related to assignments, case studies and projects, open book assessments, presentations, practical observation and project reports.

3B. Cognitive skills	
Learning outcomes:	**Learning and teaching strategy/ assessment methods**
B1: Apply relevant theories, principles, and concepts to practical scenarios in Game Art, Design, and Development, demonstrating an ability to adapt and innovate in various game development contexts. B2: Employ fundamental management principles and practices within the context of game development projects, including resource management, team coordination, and project lifecycle management. B3: Utilise a range of study skills and research methodologies to interpret data and conduct independent research, demonstrating proficiency in analysing trends, player behaviour, and market dynamics in the gaming industry. B4: Identify and analyse key issues and challenges within the Game Art, Design, and Development industry, including technological advancements, market shifts, and evolving player expectations.	**Learning and Teaching Methods**: Learners are challenged to develop their cognitive skills by developing arguments, strategies and hypotheses based upon their research. They will explore diverse topics and develop a critical analysis of their findings. Intellectual qualities are developed through lectures, seminars, tutorials, coursework, assignments, experimental work and projects. Students will be presented with briefs (both live and simulated) that utilises Project Based Learning, a student-centred pedagogy. At Level 4, students will be introduced to fundamental practices across the industry that they will further build on and analyse at Level 5. **Assessment Methods:** Learners will be assessed on their ability to critique and evaluate research. They will develop their knowledge using independent thinking skills and produce recommendations based upon and justified through supporting literature. The assessment focuses on the coursework submissions, class tests, end of semester presentations/examinations, essays, and project reports. Some of these skills are assessed in formal presentations. Assessment strategies offer students clear guidance concerning future development. Self reflection and peer evaluation constitute an important part of formative assessment.

3C. Practical and professional skills	
Learning outcomes:	**Learning and teaching strategy/ assessment methods**
C1: Undertake practical tasks using advanced technical skills and methodologies, working independently to meet specific requirements in game art, design, and development projects. C2: Exhibit practical and professional skills in game development, adhering to safe working practices, industry-standard procedures, and relevant legislation, including intellectual property and digital rights management. C3: Conduct independent research pertinent to game development, effectively communicating findings through various mediums, including design documents, presentations, and digital portfolios. C4: Design, plan, and produce engaging and innovative game content, demonstrating versatility across different genres and platforms within the gaming industry.	• Teaching and Learning Methods: Lectures, tutor directed tutorials, student led seminars, supervised practical sessions and self directed learning employing and use of the College's Virtual Learning Environment. • Assessment Methods: Coursework related to assignments, case studies and projects, written unseen examinations, open book assessments, presentations, practical examination/observation and project reports. • Application of hardware and software in an industry context. • Guest speakers/workshops to reflect on industry standards, procedures, best practice and current trends. • Use of project based module and case studies to build on knowledge and apply theoretical concepts and practical skills to real life situations.

3D. Key/transferable skills	
Learning outcomes:	**Learning and teaching strategy/ assessment methods**
D1: Develop and demonstrate effective written and oral communication skills, including numerical proficiency and the adept use of information technology, tailored for the game development context. D2: Apply strong organisational skills, encompassing task and time management as well as problem-solving abilities, both independently and collaboratively within game development teams. D3: Cultivate the ability for self-appraisal and reflective practice, using feedback and self-evaluation to continuously improve performance in game design and development processes. D4: Exhibit personal and interpersonal competencies, including efficient planning, organising, time management, and teamwork, essential for successful collaboration in game development projects.	**Learning and Teaching Methods**: Transferable and fundamental skills are delivered throughout the course, i.e., lectures, coursework assignments. The teaching and learning of ICT skills will be within the course structure. Workshops include demonstrations such as ICT skills, PowerPoint and other I.T. applications, presentations, and library research skills. Other learning and teaching methodologies include team teaching, demonstration, and peer learning. Workshops with lecturing staff and visiting professionals will support learners with research, academic writing and referencing throughout the year. Teaching and learning will be contextualised with social, ethical and legal relevance to the industry. Collaboration and communication techniques will be utilised through all learning and teaching activities, group discussions and simulations, project based learning activities, report writing and blended and virtual learning platforms. Over the course of the programme, learners are provided with essential information which they must then research, analyse and interpret. Learners will undertake further independent reading to broaden the understanding of specific problems and design principles. This is designed to stretch and challenge learners and develop their ability at Level 4 as preparation for Level 5. Creative thinking and critical analysis are engendered in every aspect of the programme and will be further fostered and encouraged through lecturer mentoring weekly. Discussion and critiques support the development of problem resolution at a higher intellectual level.

3D. Key/transferable skills	
	Assessment Methods: Learners will develop subject knowledge from data examination and enhance their understanding of assessments. Throughout the programme learners will develop digital literacy by completing assessments and presentations using suitable methods. The testing of learner knowledge is principally through coursework assignments, reports, online assessment, experimental reports, and class tests. Assessment of teamwork is through submission of teamwork tasks, student/peer and self assessment and oral presentations. Assessment strategies offer students clear guidance regarding future development. Self reflection and peer evaluation constitute an essential part of formative assessment.

Exit Award: Certificate in Higher Education in Game Art, Design and Development (Cert HE)

Programme Structure - LEVEL 5					
Compulsory modules	**Credit points**	**Optional modules**	**Credit points**	**Is module compensatable?**	**Semester runs in**
Assets 3	30			No	2/1
Pipeline 3	20			Yes	2/1
Advanced Production Techniques	30			No	2/2
Work Based Learning	40			No	2/1, 2/2

Intended learning outcomes at Level 5 are listed below:

Learning Outcomes – LEVEL 5	
3A. Knowledge and understanding	
Learning outcomes:	**Learning and teaching strategy/ assessment methods**
A1: Critically evaluate theories, concepts, and principles of digital content creation, with a specific focus on advanced techniques and methodologies used in game art, design, and development. A2: Apply and understand the processes and procedures for effective planning and skill development within the context of digital game production, emphasising project management and resource allocation. A3: Demonstrate in-depth knowledge of content creation within digital game production pipelines, including an understanding of various stages from concept to final product.	• Teaching and Learning Methods: Lectures, tutor directed tutorials, supervised practical sessions, student led seminars and use of the College's Virtual Learning Environment. • Assessment Methods: Coursework related to assignments, case studies and projects, written unseen examinations, open book assessments, presentations, practical examination/observation and project reports.

Learning Outcomes – LEVEL 5	
3A. Knowledge and understanding	
A4: Develop and refine digital working practices using a comprehensive range of practical and managerial skills, integrating advanced knowledge and techniques required for specialised roles within a game production pipeline.	

3B. Cognitive skills	
Learning outcomes:	**Learning and teaching strategy/ assessment methods**
B1: Apply critical thinking to analyse a range of relevant theories, principles, and concepts, specifically within the context of the digital game production pipeline, to identify and solve complex problems. B2: Develop the ability to conduct reasoned analysis of current practices in the game development sector, using this insight to propose and initiate improvements and innovations. B3: Skilfully locate, extract, and analyse data from a variety of sources, demonstrating proficiency in the critical evaluation of information and adherence to academic standards for acknowledgment and referencing. B4: Develop the capacity for critical self-assessment and reflection on personal performance, incorporating peer feedback and providing constructive critiques, to enhance both individual and collaborative game development projects.	**Learning and Teaching Methods**: These intellectual cognitive skills are developed through lectures, seminars, tutorials or practical based activities, independent project work and work-based learning activities. As with Level 4, students will be presented with briefs; however, at Level 5, project-based Learning will move to more complex industry defined problems, forcing the students to develop their critical thinking, creativity and communication skills. At Level 5, WBL will guide the students to develop more critical awareness, enabling students to formulate ideas and confidently research and experiment to strengthen their outcomes.

3B. Cognitive skills	
	Assessment Methods: The formative and summative assessment focuses on coursework submissions, essays and project reports. Other assessment evidence may be generated using Project management software/Logbooks / Diary / Digital Diary, Reflective Journals, A/V evidence and completed products. Assessment strategies offer students clear guidance regarding future development. Self-reflection and peer evaluation constitute an important part of formative assessment. Where students solve real life problems, cognitive skills are assessed via pitching and presenting ideas and peer feedback.

3C. Practical and professional skills	
Learning outcomes:	**Learning and teaching strategy/ assessment methods**
C1: Plan, design, and execute practical activities using advanced techniques and procedures that are specifically tailored to the digital game production industry pipeline, ensuring high-quality outcomes in line with industry standards. C2: Demonstrate practical and professional skills within a team environment, adapting to and developing new skills and workflows essential for efficient operation within a digital game production pipeline. C3: Plan, design, and create diverse game assets using appropriate media and digital formats, showcasing proficiency in various software and tools integral to game development. C4: Employ creative and innovative solutions to complete projects that are relevant to the industry, utilising contemporary techniques and production workflows to achieve professional-level results.	• Teaching and Learning Methods: Lectures, tutor directed tutorials, student led seminars, supervised practical sessions and self-directed learning employing study packs and use of the College's Virtual Learning Environment. • Assessment Methods: Coursework related to assignments, case studies and projects, written unseen examinations, open book assessments, presentations, practical examination/observation and project reports. • Application and use of online virtual labs that enable students to construct real life scenarios to experiment and test out practical approaches to simulate remote working practises. • Site visits to organisations and companies to reflect on industry standards, procedures, best practice and current trends. • Use of project-based modules and case studies to build on knowledge and apply theoretical concepts and practical skills to real life situations.

3D. Key/transferable skills	
Learning outcomes:	**Learning and teaching strategy/ assessment methods**
D1: Identify and address key challenges in game development by selecting appropriate tools and methods, applying advanced numeracy and literacy skills, along with information and data analysis, to devise effective solutions. D2: Engage effectively within a team setting, exchanging information and ideas, and adapting responses as needed to foster professional working relationships and efficient game production workflows. D3: Demonstrate advanced personal and interpersonal skills, including effective planning, organising, and management, taking responsibility for contributing to the timely completion of projects, whether working independently or as part of a team. D4: Critically evaluate personal strengths and weaknesses, question established opinions, and develop independent criteria and judgment, particularly in the context of game design and development processes.	**Learning and Teaching Methods:** Key/transferable skills will be developed through lectures, seminars and tutorials. This also includes ICT skills, information management, library research skills and preparation for placement activities. All transferable skills apply to theoretical disciplines, practical and work-based activities. Other learning and teaching methodologies include team teaching, demonstration and peer learning. Learners will be provided with key information which they will research, analyse and interpret, then seek out further reading where they must independently broaden their understanding of specific problems and creative design principles. The fundamental design of the programme is to stretch learners, develop their skills at Level 5 as preparation for Level 6. Work Based Learning at Level 5 enables students to work in industry (or simulated) contexts, driving them to become effective in their time management, taking responsibility for their work and managing working with others in a professional environment. Creative thinking and critical analysis are applied to all aspects of the programme and will be further fostered and encouraged through lecturer mentoring weekly. Discussion and critiques support the development of problem resolution at a higher intellectual level. At Level 5, students are encouraged to develop their self-reflection and set targets with the tutor, reflecting on feedback and responding to this.

3D. Key/transferable skills	
	Assessment Methods: Formative and summative assessments will be shown through coursework submissions, essays and project reports. Other assessment evidence may be generated using Logbooks / Diary / Digital Diary, Reflective Journals, A/V evidence and completed products, peer and supervisory review/evaluation.

Annexe 1: Curriculum map

Annexe 2: Curriculum mapping against the apprenticeship standard or framework (delete if not required.)

Annexe 3: Notes on completing the OU programme specification template

Annexe 1 - Curriculum map A5, A6, B5 B6, B7, B8, C5, C6, C7, C8, D5, D6, D7 NOT APPLICABLE

This table indicates which study units assume responsibility for delivering (shaded) and assessing (✔) programme learning outcomes.

Level	Study module/unit	Programme outcomes															
		A1	A2	A3	A4	B1	B2	B3	B4	C1	C2	C3	C4	D1	D2	D3	D4
4	Assets 1		✓	✓			✓		✓	✓		✓		✓			✓
	Pipeline 1	✓			✓		✓	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓		✓	✓	
	Assets 2		✓	✓		✓	✓			✓		✓		✓			✓
	Pipeline 2	✓			✓		✓	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓		✓	✓	

Level	Study module/unit	Programme outcomes															
		A1	A2	A3	A4	B1	B2	B3	B4	C1	C2	C3	C4	D1	D2	D3	D4
5	Assets 3		✓	✓		✓	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓		✓			✓
	Pipeline 3	✓			✓	✓		✓	✓		✓		✓		✓	✓	
	Advanced Production Techniques		✓	✓		✓	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓		✓			✓
	Work Based Learning	✓			✓	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓

Annexe 2: Notes on completing programme specification templates

1 **-** This programme specification should be mapped against the learning outcomes detailed in module specifications.

2 – The expectations regarding student achievement and attributes described by the learning outcome in section 3 must be appropriate to the level of the award within the **QAA frameworks for HE qualifications**: http://www.qaa.ac.uk/AssuringStandardsAndQuality/Pages/default.aspx

3 – Learning outcomes must also reflect the detailed statements of graduate attributes set out in **QAA subject benchmark statements** that are relevant to the programme/award: http://www.qaa.ac.uk/AssuringStandardsAndQuality/subject-guidance/Pages/Subject-benchmark-statements.aspx

4 – In section 3, the learning and teaching methods deployed should enable the achievement of the full range of intended learning outcomes. Similarly, the choice of assessment methods in section 3 should enable students to demonstrate the achievement of related learning outcomes. Overall, assessment should cover the full range of learning outcomes.

5 - Where the programme contains validated **exit awards** (e.g., CertHE, DipHE, PGDip), learning outcomes must be clearly specified for each award.

6 - For programmes with distinctive study **routes or pathways** the specific rationale and learning outcomes for each route must be provided.

7 – Validated programmes delivered in **languages other than English** must have programme specifications both in English and the language of delivery.