Programme Specification

1.	**Programme title**	MA Games Design MA Games Design with Professional Placement
2.	**Awarding institution**	Middlesex University
3a	**Teaching institution**	Middlesex University: London
3b	**Language of study**	English
4a	**Valid intake dates**	September
4b	**Mode and duration of study**	FT – 1 year FT with Professional Placement – 2 years PT – 2 years PT with Professional Placement – 3 years
4c	**Delivery method**	On-campus
5.	**Professional/Statutory/Regulatory body** (if applicable)	N/A
6.	**Apprenticeship Standard** (if applicable)	N/A
7.	**Final qualification(s) available**	MA Games Design MA Games Design with Professional Placement PGDip Games Design PGDip Games Design with Professional Placement PGCert Creative Technologies
8.	**Academic year effective from**	2026/27

9. Criteria for admission to the programme
Appropriate qualifications or experience: • We celebrate inclusivity and diversity and welcome applicants without the normal qualifications but who have extensive and substantial work experience in appropriate fields.

- A good undergraduate degree (normally a 2:2 or better) in a subject-specific or related design subject, or a recognised, equivalent professional qualification.
- Applicants with a good undergraduate degree in an unrelated subject but with substantial professional experience within the field such as Game Design, User Experience Design or Film Production, and able to demonstrate an aptitude for working in the subject at postgraduate level.
- In all cases, admission to the programme is dependent on:
- evidence of subject-related knowledge and skills, and of critical subject engagement, demonstrated through an annotated digital portfolio of relevant academic and professional work submitted in a suitable format.
- sufficient command of the English language. Applicants for whom English is not their first language must provide evidence of attainment to an IELTS overall score of 6.5 (with 6.0 in each component), or equivalent qualification.
- at least 1 supportive academic, and/or where relevant, professional reference.

The University aims to ensure that its admissions processes are fair, open and transparent and aims to admit students who, regardless of their background, demonstrate potential to successfully complete their chosen programme of study where a suitable place exists and where entry criteria are met. The University values diversity and is committed to equality in education and students are selected on the basis of their individual merits, abilities and aptitudes. The University ensures that the operation of admissions processes and application of entry criteria are untaken in compliance with the Equality Act.

We take a personalised but fair approach to how we make offers. We feel it's important that our applicants continue to aspire to achieving great results and make offers which take into account pieces of information provided to us on the application form. This includes recognition of previous learning and experience. If you have been working, or you have other learning experience that is relevant to your course, then we can count this towards your entry requirements and even certain modules once you start studying.

10. Aims of the programme

This MA prepares critically reflective practitioners to design, prototype and deploy a persuasive vertical slice of a game that is focused on a clearly articulated marketable user profile. Students will develop multiple portfolio piece game experiments and at least one vertical slice game.
Our students will develop advanced competence in Market Insight driven Game Design. This includes developing an understanding of using market trends and prediction as part of the project planning, design, and pitching process, framed by Middlesex's commitment to sustainable, inclusive, and audience-centred practice.

11. Programme learning outcomes

A. Knowledge and understanding

On completion of this programme the successful student will be able to:

1. Critically develop systematic responses to existing discourses and methodologies, on theories of play, interaction, and game studies to inform games design.

2. Evaluate and organize production pipelines and technical workflows for developing persuasive game prototypes for marketing and funding milestones
3. Create and formulate gameplay experiences that use technologies from paper to 3D immersive XR appropriate for the idea
4. Integrate ethical, accessibility and data-privacy principles across the game lifecycle.
5. Critically appraise global market trends to innovate game products for commercial and social value.

B. Skills

On completion of this programme the successful student will be able to:

1. Independently design and test agile pipelines aligning game development, UX testing and user analytics.
2. Experiment with a variety of emerging technologies and game types along with AI agents to extend game design.
3. Lead autonomously in communication across multidisciplinary teams through reflective, inclusive and interpersonal skills.
4. Use advanced communication techniques to convey complex game pitches and concepts to specialist and non-specialist stakeholders.
5. Reflect critically on personal practice to sustain lifelong professional growth

12. Teaching/learning methods

Students learn skills through a combination of interactive seminars, experiential activities, work in progress crits, and practical workshop activities. In term 3 project supervision and project stand ups are used as part of the teaching and learning practice.

- Work in progress crits (show and tell) – showing work from the previous weeks independent study
- Weekly planning meetings (stand ups) – setting a plan for the rest of the weeks independent study

The process of work in progress crits and weekly planning meetings with individuals and groups are used to work with students to set priorities and work plans for each week that help structure and show case students independent study in the classroom.

[1]Approx. number of timetabled hours per week (at each level of study, as appropriate), including on-campus and online hours	FT 12	PT 6
Approx. number of hours of independent study per week (at each level of study, as appropriate)	FT 38	PT 19

[1] This information will be used as part of our submission to Discover Uni (previously Unistats).

Approx. number of hours on placement (including placement, work-based learning or year abroad, as appropriate). *Where relevant, provide further details under 13c below.*	FT 15	PT 15

13. Employability

13a Development of graduate competencies

Leadership and Influence: When working on their Final Major Project, students are encouraged to direct a team of collaborators including fellow game designers as well as animators, modellers, voice actors, composers and UX designers, allowing them to gain experience assembling and leading a large and diverse team of practitioners. The shared core module on business skills provides students with the skills needed to run their own business.

Entrepreneurship: Students engage in scaffolded pitching exercises, focussed on selling their ideas to an audience, including their peers, employers and external clients. In the shared core module on business skills, they are taught to take account of market dynamics, and consider the practicalities of operating as a freelancer and forming their own business

Communication, Empathy, and Inclusion: Group presentations, pitches and crits foster empathic, inclusive, and assertive soft skills essential for effective communication and collaboration. Seminars place an emphasis on understanding the unique power of games to create and communicate meaning, as well as its representative properties as they pertain to categories of identity like gender, sexuality, race and ethnicity, fostering a sense of empathy and inclusion which extends beyond their interpersonal soft skills and directly impacts their approach to their practice.

Curiosity and Learning: Modules stimulate curiosity by exposing students to a wide array of forms, genres and traditions of game design from around the world and throughout the history of game making across mediums. They are also asked to question the industry's received conceptions of how games are made and discover how games can challenge our understanding of representation.

Collaborative Innovation: Students are encouraged to collaborate on projects across their own cohort and other disciplines. They are invited to innovate in service of producing experimental games to a set brief. In the Major Project module and the shared core modules, students are given opportunities to collaborate with those on other programmes, augmenting their practice via the participation of specialised practitioners and exposing them to the working practices of separate but complimentary disciplines.

Resilience and Adaptability: Resilience and adaptability are explicitly addressed in all our specialist modules, each of which asks students to present pitches and works-in-progress in group crits, in which all students must participate in the questioning of one another's work. This emphasises the importance of constructive feedback and fostering trust in the learning environment. Students are encouraged to embrace challenges and iterate on their creative outputs, understanding that setbacks are part of the creative process.

Technological Agility: Students are supported throughout their studies to develop technological agility through a combination of practice and conceptualisation across various industry standard

software tools. This equips them to navigate different tools comfortably and adapt to new ones efficiently. Students will be asked to critically assess the suitability of different software for confronting different tasks, problems and desired effects.

Problem Solving and Delivery: Right from the outset, students engage in problem-solving, learning to adapt and seek creative solutions to effectively communicate design ideas. Throughout their studies they learn and develop project management methodologies and tools to deconstruct tasks, prioritize, and schedule effectively, facilitating project delivery. Students are exposed to timekeeping and scheduling strategies used in industry, and through our robust feedback process and scheduled one-to-one tutorials with staff, they will be provided with the technological and intellectual toolkits necessary to solve practical and creative problems that arise throughout their creative projects.

13b Employability development

The students will take one of three work experience modules (either 15 or 30 credits) and will have the opportunity to be placed on active productions through the MDX Studios scheme. Modules on business skills and AI also teach the students about the realities of working in the industry. Production pipelines on the pre-production and major project modules mimic real-world industry workflows.

13c Placement and work experience opportunities (if applicable)

The students will take one of three work experience modules (either 15 or 30 credits) and will have the opportunity to be placed on active productions through the MDX Studios scheme.

13d Future careers / progression

This programme is designed to help students target jobs in the various games industry sub sectors including console, PC mobile, XR, in person, and tabletop games development. The types of roles students will be developing skills for are Game Producer, Game Director, Game Designer, Level Designer, Content Designer, Technical Game Designer, Combat Designer, Gameplay Designer, Product Lead, Product Manager. Graduate jobs beyond the games industry in Community Manager, User Experience Design, Project Management, Software Development, or Systems Analyst Consultant.

14. Assessment methods

15. Programme structure (level of study, modules, credits and progression requirements)

15a Structure of the programme.

Full time structure

Semester 1	Semester 1	Semester 2	Semester 2	Semester 3
Business Skills for Creative Practice 15 credits Compulsory **Digital Prototyping** 15 credits Compulsory	**Creative Practice and AI** 15 credits Compulsory **Ideation to Playtesting** 15 credits Compulsory	**Storytelling and Worldbuilding** 15 credits Compulsory **Games Design Communication** 15 credits Compulsory	**30 credits total from:** **Designing and Developing with Emerging Technologies** 15 credits Optional **Place Based Interaction** 15 credits Optional **Asset Development and Management** 15 credits Optional **Level to Virtual London** 15 credits Optional **Sound Recording for Media** 15 credits Optional **Podcasting and Audio Storytelling** 15 credits Optional **Work Experience 1** 15 credits Optional **Work Experience 2** 30 credits Optional **Work Experience 3** 15 credits Optional	**Major Project Module** 60 credits Compulsory

Full time structure with Professional Placement

Year 1

Semester 1	Semester 1	Semester 2	Semester 2	Semester 3
Business Skills for Creative Practice 15 credits Compulsory **Digital Prototyping** 15 credits Compulsory	**Creative Practice and AI** 15 credits Compulsory **Ideation to Playtesting** 15 credits Compulsory	**Storytelling and Worldbuilding** 15 credits Compulsory **Games Design Communication** 15 credits Compulsory	**30 credits total from:** **Designing and Developing with Emerging Technologies** 15 credits Optional **Place Based Interaction** 15 credits Optional **Asset Development and Management** 15 credits Optional **Level to Virtual London** 15 credits Optional **Sound Recording for Media** 15 credits Optional **Podcasting and Audio Storytelling** 15 credits Optional **Work Experience 1** 15 credits Optional **Work Experience 2** 30 credits Optional **Work Experience 3** 15 credits Optional	**Preparing for the Professional Placement** 0 credits Compulsory

Year 2

Semester 1	Semester 1	Semester 2	Semester 2	Semester 3
Work Experience 5 0 credits Optional **Work Experience 4** 0 credits Optional		**Work Experience 4** 0 credits Optional		**Major Project** 60 credits Compulsory

Indicative Part time structure

Year 1

Semester 1	Semester 1	Semester 2	Semester 2	Semester 3
Digital Prototyping 15 credits Compulsory	**Creative Practice and AI** 15 credits Compulsory	**Storytelling and Worldbuilding** 15 credits Compulsory	**15 credits total from:** **Designing and Developing with Emerging Technologies** 15 credits Optional **Place Based Interaction** 15 credits Optional **Asset Development and Management** 15 credits Optional **Level to Virtual London** 15 credits Optional **Sound Recording for Media** 15 credits Optional **Podcasting and Audio Storytelling** 15 credits Optional	

Year 2

Semester 1	Semester 1	Semester 2	Semester 2	Semester 3
Business Skills for Creative Practice 15 credits Compulsory	**Ideation to Playtesting**15 credits Compulsory	**Games Design Communication** 15 credits Compulsory	**15 credits total from:** **Designing and Developing with Emerging Technologies** 15 credits Optional **Place Based Interaction** 15 credits Optional **Asset Development and Management** 15 credits Optional **Level to Virtual London** 15 credits Optional **Sound Recording for Media** 15 credits Optional **Podcasting and Audio Storytelling** 15 credits Optional	**Major Project** 60 credits Compulsory

Indicative Part time structure with Professional Placement

Year 1

Semester 1	Semester 1	Semester 2	Semester 2	Semester 3
Digital Prototyping 15 credits Compulsory	**Creative Practice and AI** 15 credits Compulsory	**Storytelling and Worldbuilding** 15 credits Compulsory	**15 credits total from:** **Designing and Developing with Emerging Technologies** 15 credits Optional **Place Based Interaction** 15 credits Optional	

			Asset Development and Management 15 credits Optional **Level to Virtual London** 15 credits Optional **Sound Recording for Media** 15 credits Optional **Podcasting and Audio Storytelling** 15 credits Optional	

Year 2

Semester 1	Semester 1	Semester 2	Semester 2	Semester 3
Business Skills for Creative Practice 15 credits Compulsory	**Ideation to Playtesting** 15 credits Compulsory	**Games Design Communication** 15 credits Compulsory	**15 credits total from:** **Designing and Developing with Emerging Technologies** 15 credits Optional **Place Based Interaction** 15 credits Optional **Asset Development and Management** 15 credits Optional **Level to Virtual London** 15 credits Optional **Sound Recording for Media** 15 credits Optional **Podcasting and Audio Storytelling** 15 credits Optional	**Preparing for the Professional Placement** 0 credits Compulsory

Year 3

Semester 1	Semester 1	Semester 2	Semester 2	Semester 3
Work Experience 5 0 credits Optional **Work Experience 4** 0 credits Optional		**Work Experience 4** 0 credits Optional		**Major Project** 60 credits Compulsory

15b Levels and modules		
Level 7		
Compulsory (Core)	**Optional (Elective)***	**Progression requirements**
Business Skills for Creative Practice Ethical Creative Practice and AI Storytelling & Worldbuilding Games Design Communication Ideation to Playtesting Digital Prototyping Game Project	Designing and Developing with Emerging Technologies Place Based Interaction Asset Development and Management Level to Virtual Location Sound Mixing for Media Podcasting and Audio Storytelling Work Experience 1 Work Experience 2 Work Experience 3	Students must pass at least 90 credits before progressing to the Major Project module. Students on the Professional Placement (2 year) version of the programme must pass at least 90 credits before progressing onto the Professional Placement module(s) (ACI4421 or ACI4422).

*Please refer to your programme page on the website re availability of option modules

15c Non-compensatory modules	
Module level	**Module code**

16. Programme-specific support for learning
• Induction/orientation programmes for facilities • Academic advising • Direct communication with tutors and technicians via e-mail • Access to virtual learning environment & learning support platform (My Learning) to support tutor/learner interaction • Technical staff • Programmes of visiting external speakers from industry • MDX Studios initiative providing access to industry professionals and real-world productions In addition to the academic and technical staff aligned to the programme, students are supported in their learning by staff in Library Resources as follows: • Library Resources, e.g., specialist books, journals, videos, DVDs, slides, special collections (including electronic versions) • Online reading lists for each module accessible via My Learning • Subject-dedicated librarian • Special induction sessions provided by the Library Resources

17. HECos code(s)	101268 computer games design 50% 100375 web and multimedia design 25% 100736 human-computer interaction 25%

18. Relevant QAA subject benchmark(s)	**QAAHE Benchmark for Computing** https://www.qaa.ac.uk/docs/qaa/sbs/sbs-computing-22.pdf **QAA HE Benchmark for Art & Design** https://www.qaa.ac.uk/docs/qaa/subject-benchmark-statements/sbs-art-and-design-17.pdf

19. University Regulations
This programme will run in line with general University Regulations: Regulations for Taught programmes

20. Reference points

QAA HE Benchmark for computing
https://www.qaa.ac.uk/docs/qaa/sbs/sbs-computing-22.pdf

QAA HE Benchmark for Art & Design
https://www.qaa.ac.uk/docs/qaa/subject-benchmark-statements/sbs-art-and-design-17.pdf

IDGA Curriculum Framework v3.2 (2008)
https://docplayer.net/1868720-Igda-curriculum-framework.html

TIGA benchmark statement
https://tiga.org/education/tiga-benchmark-statements-for-bachelors-degrees-with-honours-in-game-development-subject-areas

The programme is also informed by the following internal sources:

The Middlesex University regulations;
Middlesex University policies on academic quality; concerns and complaints; data protections; employability; environment; equal opportunity; ethics; freedom of speech; health and safety; modern slavery statement; student conduct and discipline rules; and widening access to higher education

Strategy documents, on learning, teaching and assessment produced or curated by CAPE, especially on technology enhanced learning (TEL) and inclusivity in the curriculum

21. Other information

Please note programme specifications provide a concise summary of the main features of the programme and the learning outcomes that a typical student might reasonably be expected to achieve if they take full advantage of the learning opportunities that are provided. More detailed information about the programme can be found in the rest of your programme handbook and the university regulations.

22. Curriculum map

22a Programme learning outcomes

Knowledge and understanding	
A1	Critically develop systematic responses to existing discourses and methodologies, on theories of play, interaction, and game studies to inform games design.
A2	Evaluate and organize production pipelines and technical workflows for developing persuasive game prototypes for marketing and funding milestones
A3	Create and formulate gameplay experiences that use technologies from paper to 3D immersive XR appropriate for the idea
A4	Integrate ethical, accessibility and data-privacy principles across the game lifecycle.
A5	Critically appraise global market trends to innovate game products for commercial and social value.
Skills	
B1	Independently design and test agile pipelines aligning game development, UX testing and user analytics.
B2	Experiment with a variety of emerging technologies and game types along with AI agents to extend game design.
B3	Lead autonomously in communication across multidisciplinary teams through reflective, inclusive and interpersonal skills.
B4	Develop systematic communication for complex game pitches and concepts to specialist and non-specialist stakeholders.
B5	Reflect critically on personal practice to sustain lifelong professional growth.

Programme learning outcomes

A1	A2	A3	A4	A5	B1	B2	B3	B4	B5

Highest level achieved by all graduates

7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7

22b Mapping by level of study and module

Module Title	Module Code by Level of study	A 1	A 2	A 3	A 4	A 5	B 1	B 2	B 3	B 4	B 5
Business Skills for Creative Practice	ACI4403		X						X	X	
Creative Practice and AI	ACI4402			X	X	X		X			
Storytelling & Worldbuilding	ACI4401					X					X
Games Design Communication	GAM4000	X	X			X			X	X	X
Ideation to Playtesting	GAM4001	X		X			X				X
Digital Prototyping	GAM4002		X	X			X	X			
Major Project	GAM4050	X	X	X	X	X	X		X	X	X
Optional Modules:											
Designing and Developing with Emerging Technologies	GAM4003		X	X				X			
Work Experience 1	ACI4410	X	X			X					X
Work Experience 2	ACI4411	X	X			X					X
Work Experience 3	ACI4412	X	X			X					X