

Key Information

BA (Hons) Games Design

2025/26 Full-Time L4 Entry DE L5 Top Up

About this document: This Key Information Document gives you a summary of the core characteristics of the BA (Hons) Games Design degree at HCA. Students may have learnt about this course from multiple sources: the college website, the college prospectus, and from conversations with staff and students for example, but we want to ensure that students have this overview for reference at any time during their studies with us as a record of the service we are agreeing to provide when a student accepts our offer of a place.

Award: The qualification that a student will receive upon successful completion of the programme is a BA (Hons) Games Design. This means that the award will be a Bachelor of Arts 'with honours'.

If a student does not complete the course, they may be eligible for a Certificate or Diploma of Higher Education.

Validating Body: The BA (Hons) Games Design Degree is validated by the University of Wales Trinity Saint David. However, the course is designed and delivered by Hereford College of Arts.

Regulatory Body: Hereford College of Arts is registered with the Office for Students (OfS) to deliver Higher Education. The OfS is an independent public body which reports to Parliament through the Department for Education https://www.officeforstudents.org.uk. (Their aim is to ensure that every student, whatever their background, has a fulfilling experience of higher education that enriches their lives and careers.)

Length of Course: The standard and minimum length of this course is as follows:

Course	Standard/Minimum Length of the Course
BA (Hons) Games Design Full-time	3 years
BA (Hons) Games Design Top Up Full-time	1 year

Students will need to complete the course to gain the award.

Entry Requirements

All students need to be at least 18 years of age at the start of the course.

Applicants will submit a portfolio and may be invited for a further interview. The interview can be conducted in person or remotely. This will be a supportive process where guidance will be provided on the strengths and areas for improvement.

We usually expect applicants to have achieved a minimum of 96 UCAS points at entry. Whilst qualifications are important, our offers are not solely based on academic results. We may make offers based on other evidence of talent or suitability for the course.

Applicants who do not satisfy the standard entry requirement but offer other qualifications and or relevant experience will be considered on an individual basis subject to satisfactory information being provided at interview.

Applicants whose first language is not English and require a student visa must achieve Level B2 in an approved Secure English Language Test (SELT) prior to enrolment. For further guidance, please visit the UK Visa and Immigration website https://www.gov.uk/student-visa

Your offer letter will outline any specific requirements associated with your offer.

Our Admissions Policy can be found **here**

Core Modules

All programmes of study are made up of modules. Some modules comprise two or more assignments. Modules have a credit value that contributes to the achievement of the qualification. Each module has its own syllabus, handbook and assessment. To pass each year, you need to achieve 120 credits. Modules vary in size from 20 credits to 60 credits.

Programme Structure

From your first day at HCA, you will work as a creative, developing your skills and your own voice through a series of projects. You will develop your creative practice, practical skills alongside your critical awareness and theoretical knowledge. You will study a range of modules that build your knowledge and confidence totalling 120 credits each year.

Over the course of your studies, you will work towards emerging as a creative, agile, resilient and adaptable graduate with excellent problem-solving and transferable skills who can confidently apply research skills to keep themselves up-to-date with emerging developments and technologies in the field.

Module Title	Credits	Module Description		
Practice in Context 1	20	The module provides an overview of the context in which computer games have developed. The module also provides introduction to the work of key practitioners in Games Design, both past and present, acrovarious genres of practice, to give students a broad overview of the historical development of the discipline and of the contexts which enathe work to be understood and assessed.		
		The range of contexts examined in this module might include:		
		 Critical Play. Game culture. History & trends of interactive fiction. Introduction to game concepts, and the psychology of gaming. Historical: political, social and cultural issues being addressed, direct and indirect influences of the historical environment. Technological: factors related to development of the technology of creative production. Art historical: precedents, influences, and relationships with contemporaries working in the same field. Biographical: designer's intentions and personal factors relevant to understanding the work. Social: relationships, both individual and general, relevant to understanding the work. Ethical factors relevant to understanding and evaluating the work. Cultural: values and beliefs implicit in the work derived from the cultural environment, intentionally or unintentionally included. 		
		Students will be introduced to the context and genres within which designers operate and the cultural and social significance of their practice. When appropriate students will be encouraged to relate past work to current issues and practices.		
Practice 1	40	During this module students will be introduced to and develop an understanding of learning methods and fundamental aspects of Games Design with an awareness of environmental sustainability.		
		Students will explore and develop the ability to initiate, develop, reflect upon and evaluate 'ideas' as a creative response to resolving design problems and as the basis for games design. This fundamental skill will be supported by introductions to appropriate software, HCA workshops and		

		opportunities to work independently and/or collaboratively as part of a team. Introduction to Games Design, pipelines and principals. Introduction to game engines, games engine's software development kit (SDK) toolset, pipeline for game assets. Introduction to creativity and originality: Introductions to idea generation, discovery, experimentation and development through an iterative process. Prototyping and testing games concepts. Level design. 2D Game Art. 3D Game Art, PBR materials. Introduction to sound for games. The power of play. Various orientation, induction and familiarisation workshops and presentations. Becoming familiar with campus facilities, workshops and technicians. Introductions to environmentally sustainable practices.
Foundations for Learning	20	Foundations for Learning serves as an introduction to the entire Arts School and its approaches to learning and community. Through a variety of workshops and taught sessions across multiple disciplines, it provides opportunities to collaborate with peers from different courses. This module is designed to foster exploration, inspiration, and personal growth, while building meaningful connections to support you throughout your studies.
Practice 2	40	During this module students will continue to develop an understanding of learning methods and fundamental aspects of Games Design. These will include exploring creative design processes and applying design principles through project-based learning in order to effectively communicate in both the technical and creative environment, with an awareness of environmental sustainability.
		Students will continue to explore and develop the ability to initiate, develop, reflect upon and evaluate 'ideas' as a creative response to resolving design problems and as the basis for developing games. Specialist software will be introduced in order to design and produce creative solutions for a variety of screen-based design situations. As students gain an understanding of individual components of a game's design, they will be provided with opportunities to elaborate upon their knowledge in the production and publishing of creative outcomes.

The module might include:
 Further introductions to idea generation, discovery, experimentation and development through an iterative process. Sound for games II. Game Jam – teamwork, rapid games prototyping. Texturing for Games. Creative 3D Game Art. An introduction to game programming. Series of task-based learning and problem solving as well as covering some of the essential software in games design, and developing your own creative practice. Animation: key frame animation and motion capture data (prominent way increasingly). Consideration of environmentally sustainable practices.

BA (Hons) Games Design Level 5 (Year 2) Full time				
Module Title	Credits	Module Description		
Practice in Context 2	20	The teaching programme will provide an introduction to a number of theoretical approaches which will help students extend their understanding of how creative practice can be critically understood (meaning) and evaluated (value).		
		 Critical reading, writing and thinking. Reading games design as text: semiotics, context, culture and myth. Meaning, critical perspective, voice and reflexivity. Games branding and social identity: understanding taste, interest and preference. Image and text: relationship, balance of power, mutual influence. Theories of style: What is a style? Does style matter? Psychology of games. Games and experience: pleasure, style and the enhancement of life. Internet culture: social and cultural impacts of screen-based experience. Games design and craftsmanship. 		

		Games Design and art: what is games design? What are its limits?			
Practice 3	40	In this module, students will develop their creative practice with a dual approach, firstly to explore Narrative in wider contexts than games design, and secondly the application of storytelling principles to their ow practice.			
		This will involve exploring the essential role that storytelling has within contemporary culture and within the creative media, focussing on Games Design but learning key lessons from other forms of media.			
		Students will explore a variety of storytelling strategies and narrative structures before applying their understanding to a variety of projects.			
		Emphasis will be placed upon the application of the core skills required by employers, of the individual's ability to 'communicate effectively', and to respond to the client brief within the agreed deadline and budget.			
		The module may include:			
		 Developing a personal games design practice; idea generation, discovery, experimentation and professional execution through an iterative process. Understanding and developing narrative design and gameplay. Play and player experience. Extended realities, immersion and extended realities. Introduction to Tangible Games. Introduction to Multi-Player Game Development. Understanding how important narrative is to games from the analogue tabletop role-playing game scene, to modern digital games platforms like Indie & AAA. Developing interactive narrative games for multiple gameplay environments. Developing skills to objectively evaluate outcomes. Consideration of environmentally sustainable practices within a professional practice context. 			
Practice 4	40	In this module students will continue to develop their games design practice through a series of workshops and projects, building creative, technical and design skills.			

		After investigating a variety of appropriate opportunities, students will further explore specialist software in order to design and produce creative solutions for a variety of games situations. Students will work individually to create authorial, original games designs and, if appropriate, work as part of a design team.	
		Developing 3D Game Art.	
		 Playful Media – stretching what games are. 3D Game Art II: project management, integrate assets into games engine, game prototypes, refining character art, games design documentation. Games Studio; producing a vertical slice of a game: playable projects and demo videos (level design), exploring specialisms within a studio. Use of motion capture data to produce animations for a playable character in a games engine. Game Engine techniques such as Scripting, Lighting, VFX and Cinematography. Introductions to UI/UX design principles and creation. Developing skills to objectively evaluate design outcomes. 	
		 Opportunities to work professionally with external clients where appropriate. Producing games within a social action context. Opportunities to create external links with employers. Consideration of environmentally sustainable practices within a professional practice context. 	
Professional Practice 1	20	During this module, students will develop professional skills through independently negotiating, organising and completing an appropriate period of professional work experience.	
		Opportunities for professional work experience may include, live briefs, individual and group exhibitions, participating in national or international conferences, competitions, commissions, designing and delivering a socially engaged community or schools project or undertaking placements in arts organisations such as arts workshops, art cooperatives, galleries etc.	
		A series of visiting speakers, ranging from artist to professionals from creative organisations and education, will provide insightful advice into areas such as:	

 Insight into games industry practice. Commercial games. Gamification outside the games industry. Wider applications of game engine technology. This employability focused module looks at a number of specific aspects with web presences, social media and industry engagement, while also allowing you the chance to add more work to your portfolio to fit your future career plans. How to approach individual creative or organisations. What different creative professions entail. Expectations in the workplace. Reaching outside the games community. Working to client commission/competition briefs. Collectives/collaboration/networking: working with other people, how, why, what and when?
experience(s) and create a multi-media Professional Development Plan with supporting material for summative assessment.

BA (Hons) Games Design Level 6 (Year 3) Full time			
Module Title	Credits	Module Description	
Practice in Context 3	20	The content of this module differs for each student, as each undertakes a research project into a self-selected topic designed to help them make sense of their own specialist area of studio practice in terms of culture, context and critical theory. Working closely with an individual supervisor, students are guided to	
		select a research topic that is both manageable and appropriate to their studio interests and are helped both to locate and organise relevant sources and to construct a critical position informed by theory.	
		The project is an exercise in largely self-directed academic research, but students receive tailored individual support and are given a series of target dates for reaching set stages of the project (e.g., delivery of title and synopsis, first draft, and so on) to ensure they stay on track as they progress towards the final deadline.	
Practice 5	30	In this module students will apply the knowledge and skills acquired in previous modules to show consolidation of creative practice and will respond to project briefs. There is emphasis on research, critical thinking, personal reflection and the production of creative work for the purpose of building a graduate portfolio.	
		Students will use an established creative process to produce suitable design development work demonstrating extensive knowledge and understanding of an area of specialisation within their practice and to	

		produce and present outcomes that show an awareness of professional practice and employability skills.
		The module might include:
		 Opportunities to build a graduate portfolio. Games Studio Pre-Production (producers rather than content generators). Games Studio; one project of group work. Opportunities to perform independent research and development into games technologies of your choosing. Use this R&D to create a brief of the student's choosing, with the aim of creating final portfolio projects aimed at strengthening skills in modern game technologies contributing directly to their employability. Developing advanced games design skills in your specialism. Developing skills to objectively evaluate design outcomes. Consideration of environmentally sustainable practices within a professional practice context. Honing your individual specialist skills.
Professional Practice 2	10	Students will revisit and refine their Professional Development Plan and produce additional material to support the generation of their graduate portfolio including the development of social media and web presences, business identity (where appropriate), ensuring they are appropriately prepared to launch their professional careers.
		A series of visiting speakers, ranging from artist to professionals from creative organisations and education, will provide insightful advice into areas such as:
		 The employment landscape (portfolio careers, the gig economy etc). The self-employment landscape. Raising your profile. Copyright Law, licensing, contracts, T&C's, insurance, taxation, NI. How, why, what and when? The differences between self-employment and permanent employment; Proactive/Reactive/business ownership/entrepreneurship. Ethics, Morality and your career, an overview of how the Media operates; censorship & self-censorship/audience/working ethically/sustainable choices. Representation online/ Social Media networking. CV writing skills/Letter of introduction writing/application writing skills.

		 Costing work/funding- writing applications and bids/budgeting. Evaluating projects and clients/managing clients and employers. Creating online profiles, screen skills, applying for bursaries. Online networking and contacts. Further study; Postgraduate courses, Teaching courses. 	
Practice 6	60	This module provides students with the opportunity to 'negotiate' a larger scale design project within a larger student team, to produce a vertical slice of a game. Students will engage with a thorough reflective process, designed to focus on their creative identity in relation to their professional trajectory. There is emphasis on team work, collaboration, research, critical thinking, and the production of creative work for the purpose of continuing to build a graduate portfolio including the production of publicity material and representative media with the aim to showcase their ability as designers, and from which to potentially launch their professional	
		 The module might include: The opportunity to engage in negotiated and self-initiated creative projects. Opportunities to build a graduate portfolio. 	
		 Game Studio: Students will work in a senior role in a multi level student team to make a vertical slice of a game as either an artist, designer or tech / scripter, producer. Opportunities to create representative promotional media. Using developed evaluating skills to objectively evaluate design outcomes. Developing advanced Motion Graphics skills, (visual effects and TV). Opportunities to create external links with employers. Consideration of environmentally sustainable practices within a professional practice context. 	

Course Composition & Delivery:

The course is modular and is managed on a two-semester schedule totalling 31 weeks of tuition. The academic year begins in September and ends in June.

Level 4: the course defines Level 4 as induction and core generic skills acquisition

Level 5: applies the new skills gained at Level 4 in a range of appropriate contexts

Level 6: students specialise through individual learning programmes

The total length of the academic year is 33 weeks (including enrolment, induction and a research week), with breaks for Christmas, Easter and Summer.

Students will have access to college resources (studios, library, workshops, social areas) on weekdays during normal working hours and later on some days and at certain times of the year. Students may also have access to some resources during vacations, and current information on this is available upon request.

Students are awarded 'credits' for the successful completion of a module, totalling 120 in each academic year. A single credit is defined as ten hours of study, so a 20-credit module requires a total of 200 hours of study. A student must successfully achieve 120 credits. 1200 hours of study in total.

The percentage of contact time devoted to differing learning environments depends on the individual module content, but the course seeks to use a wide variety of teaching methods wherever possible. Examples of teaching methods include process inductions and workshops, demonstrations, lectures, presentations, master-classes, online learning activities, tutorials and seminar discussion groups.

Assessment is almost exclusively made by submission of coursework in the form of a portfolio, although written essays and reviews, plus presentations, are also used. There are no timed, written examinations.

Blended Learning

Hereford College of Arts is completely committed to face-to-face learning and the vast majority of our education takes place on campus in our workshops, studios, library, lecture rooms.

We do use online learning when it's the best mode of delivery, for example an international artist delivering a live stream from their studio or where a student has an agreed exceptional circumstance that warrants online learning in that instance.

Typical Delivery Plan

The tables below indicate the typical delivery schedules for the programme for each pattern of attendance. The team reserves the right to re-organise the delivery of modules per semester, in accord with resource availability and student requests (which will be accommodated where feasible).

Full-time study

Level 4

Semester 1	Practice in	Practice 1 40 credits	Foundations
Semester 2	Context 1 20 Credits	Practice 2 40 credits	for Learning 20 credits

Level 5

Semester 1	Context 2	Practice 3 40 credits	Professional Practice 1 20 credits
Semester 2		Practice 4 40 credits	

Level 6/Top Up

Semester 1	Practice in Context 3 20 Credits	Practice 5 30 credits	Professional Practice 2 10 credits
Semester 2	Practice 6 60 credits		

Tuition Fees

The tuition fees for 2025/26 are outlined in the table below. For more information about applying for a tuition fee loan, please visit www.direct.gov.uk/studentfinance.

Please note that this annual fee will remain unchanged for the 3-year duration of your course. However, following enrolment, students transferring to an alternative mode of study, repeating or retaking modules or suspending their studies, will need to confirm fees with the Finance Department.

Course	Level	Year	Fees
BA (Hons) Games Design full-time (Home students)	4	Year 1	£9275
BA (Hons) Games Design full-time (Home students)	5 (Direct entrants)	Year 2	£9000
BA (Hons) Games Design Top Up full-time (Home students)	6	Year 1	£9000

EU students who have pre-settled status under the EU Settlement Scheme will be eligible for a tuition fee loan only. Please note that the Higher Education Student Finance portal normally opens in mid-February. The College would encourage students to submit their student finance application as soon as possible so funding is in place for when they start their course

All students need to ensure that the funding is in place for their tuition fees and living costs prior to enrolment.

Payment, Service Delivery & Performance Arrangements:

- If the tuition fee is paid to the College via the Student Loans Company, it will be paid in 3 instalments 25% in term 1, 25% in term 2 and 50% in term 3.
- If a student is paying their own tuition fees, students can pay in instalments by direct debit only. Students will be required to pay 1/3 of their annual tuition fees each term.
- Overseas students are required to pay their tuition fees in full by June prior to the commencement of their course.
- Any of the additional costs (see additional costs section) are collected via an online secure payment system.

Additional Costs

Additional costs are directly related to your study but exclude accommodation and student's personal living costs. Further information about halls of residence and other accommodation available in Hereford is available on our website.

The courses at HCA have been designed to minimise the impact of additional costs; some trips and materials will be fully funded by the college or heavily subsidised. However, typically, a student will choose to spend around an additional £1200-£2400 in the first year, £250-£470 in the second year and £200-£470 in their final year, depending on scale of work and materials chosen or other related costs.

Students spend different amounts depending on the areas in which they specialise and individual choices. We appreciate that not all students will be able to invest the same money in their work, and staff assessing it will not judge work by the cost of materials or other resources.

The college shop stocks specialist materials at competitive prices and digital equipment can be loaned from the media stores at no extra cost to students.

Students studying Games Design will be using Maxon One with ZBrush. Maxon One is a powerful creative toolset which enable students to create stunning VFX, sculpt lifelike characters, design broadcast graphics, visualise various content, animate graphics, maximise hardware for rendering, and enhance their work with compositing, editing, and filmmaking tools. This industry standard software is available for all students to access on campus with the option for a student licence for £66.00 per annum which you can also transfer home with you.

Students on all courses may also have the chance to take part in optional trips that require additional payment. Non – attendance on the trips will not incur assessment penalties, though trips are designed to help students develop their practice. There is an optional annual cross-course overseas residential trip. In the 2023-24 academic year, the trip was a four-day visit to Paris at a cost to students of £425. This fee included a shared dorm room and all travel costs from Hereford to Paris including Eurostar tickets.

Places on the optional trips are allocated on a first come first serve basis.

The College is committed to ensuring that students considering studying at HCA are fully aware of the possible additional costs.

Following enrolment, students that face genuine financial hardship may apply to the College Hardship Fund.

Average Cost Breakdown

This table is an estimate of the minimum costs a typical student may face during the course.

The nature of creative study means it is difficult to be precise with material costs. We encourage students to source sustainable materials and recycle where they can however students are free to invest in additional resources pertinent to their emerging practice.

Unless specified the cost listed refers to the whole three-years of study.

Item	Minimum Cost	Notes
Adobe	£16.24 per month	Adobe CC subscription for use outside of college hours (discounted by 70%) NB Adobe CC is free to use for any student working within the college. Adobe often runs a Black Friday deal for a year's subscription for only £13.15 per month.
Microsoft Office 365	£0	The College provides a free subscription to Microsoft 365 with all Office applications and 1TB of cloud storage upon enrolment.
Maxon One with Zbrush	£0	Students have free access on campus with the option for some home use.
Gaming Laptop or PC	£800-£1200	A student subscription is also available for £66.00 per year.
Graphics Tablet & Stylus	£100-£600	
1 to 2TB portable hard drive	£66-£120	
Print Charges for course Work	£75	The College charges 4p per page for A4 B&W printing, 20p for colour. A3 is 6p per page for standard B&W printing and 40p for colour.
Print charges for exhibition display work	£100	HCA offers a selection of specialised high-quality printing at various rates.
Transport costs on city visits	£50	Reduced ticket pricing is available through 16-25 National Rail card. Most local/countywide trips are funded through the course budget. This example considers self-directed research trips by train to Birmingham and/or London etc
Purchasing tickets for museums and galleries	£50	Reduced ticket pricing available through providers such as Student Art Pass. The College will cover the cost of course-specific trips as much as possible.
Promoting own art practice (Webhosting, Domain name registration, business cards etc)	£50	
Academic texts, books, magazines & subscriptions		As well as subscribing to a wide range of magazines and journals HCA's Library is home to an extensive back catalogue of printed material. So, while students are encouraged to subscribe to course-related material it is likely that it will be freely available in our library.
Portfolio cases	N/A	Many students already have portfolios from previous education route; these don't become a course 'requirement' until L6 in preparation for industry interviews

Location of Study

Our degree courses are all based at our College Road Campus but several specialist workshops and performing spaces are located nearby on our Folly Lane Campus and degree level students often work between both sites. Much of a student's study will also involve working in different locations in the city and surrounding area.

Locations & Contact Details

- College Road Campus: Hereford College of Arts, College Road, Hereford. HR1 1EB.
- Folly Lane Campus: Hereford College of Arts, Folly Lane, Hereford. HR1 1LT.
- **Telephone:** 01432 273359

If you have any enquiries, please contact our registry department: registry@hca.ac.uk

Complaint Handling Process

Our full complaints policy can be found here; Our full complaints policy can be found here.

Information relating to all academic regulations, including complaints procedures can be found via the UWTSD public website here.