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GRADUATES
GUIDE 2025

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ABOUT TIGA

TIGA IS THE TRADE ASSOCIATION REPRESENTING THE UK VIDEO GAMES INDUSTRY.

Our core membership includes UK game developers, digital publishers, universities and service providers. TIGA's aim is to make the UK the best place in the world to develop video games.

TIGA focuses on three key areas:

1) Enhancing games education.
2) Engaging with Government and Parliament.
3) Driving excellence across our industry.

Enhancing Games Education

TIGA enhances excellence in games education in three principal ways:

- We accredit the best games courses and so drive best practice in education.
- We deliver the TIGA Games Education Awards to promote excellence amongst students, lecturers and universities.
- We organise the TIGA Games Education Conference to encourage knowledge sharing between industry and academia.

Engagement with Government and Parliament

TIGA engages with the UK Government and Parliament to create an environment favourable to the video games industry.

- TIGA is campaigning for a more effective Video Games Expenditure Credit, measures to improve access to finance, the introduction of an Industrial Secondments Programme, retention of funding for BTECs, the development of suitable T-Levels, reform the Apprenticeship Levy, and more.
- TIGA engages with key MPs and policy makers.
- TIGA publishes original research about the UK games industry to advance our engagement with policy makers.

Driving Excellence

TIGA drives excellence across the UK video games industry through:

- The TIGA Games Industry Awards.
- The TIGA STAR Employer Awards.
- The provision of best practice information and exclusive industry reports.

INTRODUCTION

The video games industry is one of the UK's most vibrant and successful creative sectors – and the career opportunities and pathways it offers are myriad, encompassing a wide range of disciplines to suit skill sets of people from all backgrounds.

According to TIGA's own research, in May 2024 the industry employed over 25,000 full time development staff (28,000+ including freelancers) in 2,148 studios.

The sector provides high skilled employment: over 80 per cent of the development workforce in many studios are qualified to degree level or above. But there are also routes into games for those without a university education, including BTECs, internships, apprenticeships and more.

We are also a truly nationwide industry, supporting economic growth in clusters throughout the UK: approximately 80 per cent of the workforce is based outside of London.

As well as there almost certainly being a games studio near where you live or study, games development is a digital sector, so work can often be undertaken and delivered remotely.

In addition, our video games development sector is supported by 278 companies that provide it with key services, including QA, localisation, music, audio, script, art and animation. These companies employ 3,289 highly skilled people.

The opportunities available to you are myriad. However, navigating the vast landscape of available disciplines, job roles and career paths can be somewhat overwhelming, while the process of presenting yourself to potential employers and attending interviews can be a daunting prospect.

As the trade association representing the UK video games industry, TIGA has collaborated with key stakeholders to produce this guide, which we hope will be of great help as you begin your first steps towards what will be an exciting and incredibly rewarding career.

In the following pages we'll break down everything from the kind of roles and responsibilities you might want to consider, and the knowledge and qualifications they require, to practical hints and tips when it comes to curating your portfolio, prepping for interviews or, indeed, starting your own studio.

We wish you the best of luck on the next stage of your career journey.

Dr Richard Wilson OBE, CEO of TIGA

JOB SEEKER RESOURCES

As an undergraduate or postgraduate student studying game development in the UK, effectively navigating job seeker resources is crucial for your career pathway. This guide will help you understand and utilise these resources to maximise your job search efforts.

By effectively using these resources, you can significantly enhance your job search and increase your chances of landing a role in the game development industry. Remember, persistence and networking are key to success.

1 UNDERSTANDING JOB SEEKER RESOURCES

a. Job Boards:

- **General Job Boards**: Websites like Indeed, Reed, and Monster offer a wide range of job listings, including roles in game development.

- **Specialised Job Boards**: For game development, platforms like GamesIndustry.biz, Games Jobs Direct and Hitmarker cater specifically to the games industry.

- **University Career Services**: Many universities have job boards with listings for internships and entry-level positions, ideal for students and recent graduates.

b. Recruitment Agencies:

- Agencies like Aardvark Swift, Amiqus, Avatar Games, Big Planet, and Skillsearch specialise in the gaming games. They can provide personalised job recommendations and career advice.

c. Networking Platforms:

- **LinkedIn**: Essential for professional networking. Complete your profile, join game development groups, and connect with industry professionals.

- **Industry Events**: Attend games conferences like Develop:Brighton, EGX, London Games Festival and regional events such as Guildford Games Festival, Interactive Futures, Yorkshire Games Festival and Scottish Games Week, plus workshops, and meetups to network and learn about job opportunities.

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2 **USING JOB BOARDS EFFECTIVELY**

a. Create a Robust Profile:

- On platforms like LinkedIn, ensure your profile is complete, professional, and showcases your skills and projects.

- Use keywords relevant to game development to increase the chances of your profile appearing in employer searches.

b. Regularly Search for Jobs:

- Set aside time each week to search for and apply to jobs.

- Use filters to narrow down listings to roles relevant to game development.

c. Set Up Job Alerts:

- Most job boards allow you to set up email alerts for new job postings matching your criteria.

3 **WORKING WITH RECRUITMENT AGENCIES**

a. Choose the Right Agency:

- Select agencies that specialise in the games industry, as per the above, for more targeted assistance.

b. Build a Relationship:

- Develop a rapport with your recruiter. Be clear about your career goals, preferred company culture, and salary expectations.

c. Provide a Great CV and Portfolio (*see below*)**:**

- Ensure your CV and portfolio are up-to-date and showcase your best work. Tailor them to the games industry.

4 **LEVERAGING NETWORKING PLATFORMS**

a. Engage Actively:

- Regularly update your profile, share relevant content, and engage with others' posts.

b. Connect with Industry Professionals:

- Reach out to alumni, lecturers, and industry professionals with a personalised message.

c. Attend Online Webinars and Workshops:

- These can be great opportunities for learning and networking.

5 ATTENDING INDUSTRY EVENTS

a. Research Relevant Events:

• Look for games expos, conferences, and local meetups. Universities often advertise such events.

b. Prepare Your Elevator Pitch:

• Be ready to introduce yourself and talk about your skills and interests succinctly.

c. Collect and Follow Up on Contacts:

• Exchange contact information and follow up with a brief email or LinkedIn message.

GRADS IN GAMES TOP TIPS

Attending physical events can also be beneficial but you do not need to attend every one or put a financial burden on yourself to attend.

If you do attend physical events – go to have some fun with like-minded industry people, maybe set yourself a goal to speak with a set number of people or go along with a friend to make it a bit easier. Different events will have a different focus so do a bit of research and find ones that sounds right for you.

Grads in Games have a Discord channel full of really great, helpful game devs, GiG alumni and graduates in a similar position to yourself, it's a good place to also build up a bit of a network and community around you.

Online networking can be a great way to start building a community around yourself, we highly recommend it if you haven't already got one to get a LinkedIn profile.

On LinkedIn, you can find and follow games studios that you have an interest in working in, you can set-up job alerts and post notifications as well as connect with and follow people already working in the industry.

LinkedIn can also be a good place to post work in progress and project updates, receive feedback and ask for advice. You can put your portfolio link and CV on your profile too so people can review them and get in touch.

6 GENERAL TIPS

• **Be Persistent:** The job search can be a lengthy process, especially in specialised fields like game development.

• **Seek Feedback:** From professors, peers, or industry contacts on your CV and portfolio.

• **Stay Informed:** Keep up with industry news and trends in game development.

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CREATING YOUR CV

Creating a CV as an undergraduate student in game development involves highlighting your academic achievements, relevant skills, projects, and any work experience in a concise and impactful manner.

Remember, your CV is a marketing tool. It should present you in the best possible light, relevant to the game development industry. Consider also maintaining an online portfolio (*see portfolio guide*) showcasing your projects, as this is particularly valuable in the game development field.

GRADS IN GAMES TOP TIPS

- *Your CV is a crucial aspect of landing your dream job in the games industry!*

- *Your passion for games and games development goes a long way, but nailing your CV will help get you that all important first interview.*

- *Whilst your CV is an important supporting document, it is not as important as your portfolio.*

- *There is lots of conflicting advice about CVs, but there is no magic formula.*

- *You can however tailor your CV for the games industry.*

GUIDANCE FOR WRITING YOUR CV

Be Concise: Aim for one page, especially at the undergraduate level.

Tailor Your CV: Customise your CV for each application, highlighting the most relevant experience and skills.

Use Action Words: Words like 'developed', 'created', 'implemented' can make your experiences sound more impactful.

Proofread: Ensure there are no spelling or grammar errors.

Use a Professional Format: Keep the design clean and readable. Creative formats can be used, but ensure they are not distracting.

YOUR CV STRUCTURE

Here's a guide to help you structure your CV effectively:

1. Contact Information:
- Name
- Address (optional)
- Phone Number
- Email Address
- LinkedIn Profile (if available)
- Portfolio Link (highly recommended for game development)

2. Objective or Summary (Optional but recommended):

- A brief statement (2-3 sentences) about your career goals and what you aim to bring to a potential employer. Tailor this to the type of job you're seeking in game development.

3. Education:

- University Name – include the name of your institution.
- Degree – Bachelor's in Game Development or similar.
- Expected Graduation Date – e.g., May 2024.
- GPA – if it's impressive (generally above 3.0).
- Relevant Coursework – list courses that are relevant to game development.

4. Skills:

- Programming Languages – e.g., C++, Python, Java.
- Game Engines – Unity, Unreal Engine, etc.
- Tools and Software – Photoshop, Blender, Maya.
- Soft Skills – Teamwork, communication, problem-solving.

GRADS IN GAMES TOP TIPS

- *Your technical skills are important, but don't need to fill a page! Summarise your knowledge in a table or as short points, giving employers a quick visual reference of your key skills.*

- *Highlight key areas you have experience working with, including relevant software, tools & programming languages. If you are more proficient in any areas, such as physics programming or character animation, make sure it's top of the list here!*

- *Avoid giving yourself a score or ranking your technical skills.*

5. Projects:

- Include any relevant projects, either from coursework or personal endeavours. For each project, mention:
- Project Title
- Tools/Technologies Used
- Your Role in the project.
- Brief Description – What the project was, your contribution, and any notable achievements.

6. Work Experience (if any):

- Include internships or part-time jobs. Focus on those that are relevant to game development, but other experience can also be included to demonstrate soft skills.
- For each position, list:
  - Job Title
  - Company
  - Duration (month and year)
  - Key Responsibilities/Achievements

7. Extracurricular Activities:

- Participation in clubs, organisations, or competitions relevant to game development.
- Leadership roles or specific contributions.

GRADS IN GAMES TOP TIPS

On a games CV this should be seen as a perfect opportunity to sell your passion and interest in the games industry:

- *What games do you enjoy and why?*
- *What projects do you work on in your spare time?*
- *Do you do game jams and attend dev events?*
- *What groups, networks or collectives are you involved in?*

8. Certifications (if any):

- Relevant certifications can be included, especially those that are well-recognised in the field of game development.

9. References:

- Optionally include a line stating "References available upon request".

YOUR CV COVER NOTE

Crafting an effective covering letter for your CV as an undergraduate post-graduate student studying game development involves showcasing your enthusiasm, relevant skills, and academic accomplishments in a concise and engaging manner.

Your cover letter is your chance to make a strong first impression and complement your CV. Be sure to convey your enthusiasm for both the role and the field of game development, while also demonstrating how your academic background and any relevant experience make you an ideal candidate for the position.

**TIPS FOR
WRITING YOUR
COVERING LETTER**

- **Tailor Your Letter**: Customise your letter for each application. Research the company and the role to make your letter relevant and compelling.
- **Keep It Concise:** Aim for no more than one page.
- **Match the Tone**: If the company seems more formal, use a professional tone. If it's a startup or creative company, a more relaxed tone might be appropriate.
- **Highlight Key Skills**: Focus on skills and experiences most relevant to the job and the game development industry.
- **Proofread**: Ensure there are no spelling or grammatical errors. Consider asking a friend or a career counsellor to review it.
- **Use a Professional Format**: Ensure the layout is clean and easy to read. Stick to standard fonts and avoid overly decorative elements.

Here's a step-by-step guide to help you write a compelling cover letter:

1. Header:
- Your Name
- Address (optional)
- Phone Number
- Email Address
- Date
- Employer's Name (if known)
- Employer's Title (if known)
- Company Name
- Company Address

2. Salutation:
- If you know the name of the hiring manager, use "Dear [Name]".
- If not, "Dear Hiring Manager" is a suitable alternative.

3. Introduction:
- Open with a strong, attention-grabbing statement.
- State the specific role you're applying for.
- Mention how you found out about the job opening (e.g., company website, job board, referral).

4. Body (1-2 paragraphs):
First Paragraph:
- Explain why you are interested in this role and the company.
- Highlight your passion for game development and any specific aspects of the company's work that excite you.

Second Paragraph:

- Detail your relevant skills and experiences. Link your coursework, projects, or any previous internships to the job requirements.
- Mention specific achievements or projects that demonstrate relevant skills. Use quantitative results if possible.
- Show how your skills and experiences make you a good fit for the role.

5. Closing Paragraph:

- Reiterate your enthusiasm for the position and the company.
- State that you would welcome the opportunity to discuss your application further in an interview.
- Thank them for considering your application.

6. Sign-off:

- Use a professional closing such as "Yours sincerely" (if you know the name of the hiring manager) or "Yours faithfully" (if you do not).
- Your typed name.

CREATING AN AMAZING PORTFOLIO

So you're a game development student in the UK, eager to break into the industry. A stellar portfolio is your key to unlocking that dream job. This guide will equip you, whether you're an undergraduate or postgraduate, with the knowledge to build a portfolio that grabs the attention of potential employers.

1 SELECTING YOUR BEST WORK

- **Quality Over Quantity**: Choose projects that best showcase your skills and understanding of game development. It's better to have a few polished pieces than many unfinished ones.
- **Diversity**: Include a variety of work that demonstrates your range of skills and versatility. This can include different genres, platforms, or roles you've undertaken.
- **Recent Projects**: Prioritise showcasing your most recent work, as it likely reflects your current skill level and knowledge of the latest game development trends and technologies.

2 ORGANISING YOUR PORTFOLIO

- **Structure**: Create a clear and intuitive structure for your portfolio. Start with your strongest project and categorise your work in a way that makes sense – by role, project type, or skill set.
- **Accessibility**: Ensure your portfolio is easily accessible. A clean, navigable website or a well-organised digital document can make a significant difference in how your work is perceived.

GRADS IN GAMES TOP TIPS

Make it easy to access

Have a dedicated place to host it with a short, direct link. Check out options such as WordPress and others for hosting a simple but effective portfolio site. A GitHub or itch.io profile isn't going to be enough as a portfolio on its own, but should definitely be referenced in it. Artists are recommended to use Artstation to host their portfolios.

Have a simple intro profile

Similar to an intro profile that you'd write on a CV, you need to very briefly explain who you are and what you do. This should be as short and concise as possible, covering the key information you need people to know: what you do, where you're based & what type of work you're looking for.

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3 DETAILING YOUR PROJECTS

- **Context**: For each project, provide a brief description that sets the scene. Include your objectives, the tools and technologies used, and the project duration.
- **Your Role and Contributions**: Clearly articulate your specific role and contributions to each project. Employers want to know what you were responsible for and how you impacted the project's outcome.
- **Challenges and Solutions**: Highlight any challenges you faced during the project and how you overcame them. This demonstrates your problem-solving abilities and resilience.
- **Outcomes and Reflections**: Share the outcomes of the project and what you learned from the experience. This shows your ability to reflect and learn from your work.

4 SHOWCASING TECHNICAL SKILLS

- **Code Samples**: If programming is your strength, include code samples or links to repositories. Ensure the code is well-commented and includes a readme file explaining the purpose and functionality.
- **Design Documents**: If game design is your forte, include design documents, flowcharts, or game scripts. These should demonstrate your ability to plan and design game mechanics and narratives.
- **Artwork and Animations**: For artists and animators, include high-quality images or videos of your artwork, models, or animations. Consider including sketches or work-in-progress shots to show your development process.

GRADS IN GAMES TOP TIPS

Quality over quantity is key. Showcase only your best pieces and don't make the viewer work to find it. Include big, high-quality images which include a link to the live version.

Write a brief description for each project you're putting on display, while listing any technical skills, tools, engines, languages etc. used.

If you can get one, a testimonial from a client / player can do wonders and inspire confidence in your skills.

Programmers and designers should include examples of complete, finished projects and prototypes. Get them published (e.g. itch.io) & available for download.

When providing video content, annotate or provide commentary if possible, to allow the viewer a better insight into the work you've done and the skills you have.

When showing collaborative projects, you must be able to provide a clear explanation of the work that you personally did. Studios will want to know what your level of contribution was to the project & this will almost always be asked at a job interview.

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5 ▶ **PERSONAL PROJECTS AND COLLABORATIONS**

- **Side Projects**: Include any personal projects or game jams you've participated in. These can demonstrate your passion and initiative outside of academic assignments.
- **Team Projects**: Highlight any collaborative projects, clearly stating your role and contributions. This shows your ability to work effectively in a team, a crucial skill in the game development industry.

6 ▶ **PROFESSIONAL PRESENTATION**

- **Contact Information**: Clearly display your name, contact information, and professional social media links or online profiles.
- **Layout and Design**: Use a clean, professional layout that reflects your personal brand. The design should not overshadow the content but enhance the presentation of your work.
- **Feedback and Iteration**: Seek feedback on your portfolio from peers, mentors, or industry professionals. Be open to constructive criticism and continuously refine your portfolio.

7 ▶ **ONLINE PRESENCE AND NETWORKING**

- **Personal Website**: Ideally, host your portfolio on a personal website. This provides a central hub for your work and information about you.
- **Social Media and Forums**: Use platforms like LinkedIn, Bluesky, Twitter/X, or industry-specific forums to share your portfolio and connect with other professionals.
- **Consistency**: Ensure your online presence is consistent and professional across all platforms.

GRADS IN GAMES TOP TIPS

Make it easy for people to contact you

Any contact details you provide should be clearly presented and in an easy to find place. Either a 'contact me' tab at the top of the page or placed as a header/footer on every page will do.

A professional email address is the best contact option, though a simple contact form is fine too. Just make sure it's an account you actually check regularly!

If you have professional social media accounts, leave links to these here. Use social icons for accessibility.

Your portfolio is an evolving showcase of your work and skills. Regularly update it as you complete new projects and acquire new skills. A strong portfolio opens doors to interviews and opportunities, so invest the time to make it reflect the best of your abilities and aspirations.

INTERVIEW TECHNIQUES

PREPARING FOR THE INTERVIEW

Preparing for job interviews can be a daunting process, but the keys to success and confidence are all in the way you prepare. Here's a comprehensive guide to help you navigate a job interview situation, including potential questions you might face and the questions you should consider asking about career progression and learning opportunities.

- **Research the Company**: Understand their game portfolio, company culture, and recent news. This shows your interest and helps tailor your responses.

- **Review Your Projects**: Be ready to discuss your role, contributions, and the outcomes of projects you've worked on, especially those relevant to the role you're applying for.

- **Practise Technical Skills**: If the role requires specific technical skills, ensure you're practised and ready to demonstrate your knowledge, potentially through a technical test or portfolio review.

- **Prepare Questions**: Have a list of questions ready to ask the interviewer (see suggestions below!). This not only helps you learn more about the position, but also demonstrates your enthusiasm and engagement.

GRADS IN GAMES TOP TIPS

What to wear

In general, our advice here is casual but smart for the games industry – it's better to be slightly over-dressed than under-dressed for an interview. We wouldn't recommend a suit in most instances, especially for development roles. A shirt and a smart pair of trousers are normally best. This dress code will also help you feel more at ease and relaxed at the interview itself.

If you can't attend or are going to be late

Call your studio contact the minute that you find out that you can't attend. Hopefully they'll be able to rearrange the interview (even at short notice) and would be much happier doing this then dealing with a no show that hasn't got in touch. If you are running late, call and advise of the delay too.

COMMON INTERVIEW QUESTIONS FOR GAME DEVELOPMENT ROLES

1. Technical/Creative Skills and Knowledge

Examples:
- "Can you explain the difference between Unity and Unreal Engine?"
- "How would you approach research biomes for your game world?"
- "How do you optimise game performance?"
- "What would be your approach to writing dialogue for NPCs?"
- "Describe a challenging bug you encountered and how you resolved it."

2. Project Experience

Examples:

- "Tell us about a game project you worked on. What was your role, and what challenges did you face?"
- "How do you approach teamwork in a game development project?"
- "Provide an example of how you managed a tight deadline for a project."

3. Industry Awareness

Examples:

- "What game development trends do you find most exciting?"
- "Which game engine do you prefer, and why?"
- "Can you discuss a game that impressed you technically and explain what stood out?"

4. Behavioural/Soft Skills Questions

Examples:

- "Describe a time when you had to work under pressure. How did you handle it?"
- "How do you stay motivated during a lengthy development process?"
- "Can you give an example of how you've dealt with conflict within a team?"

QUESTIONS TO ASK ABOUT CAREER PROGRESSION AND LEARNING

When preparing for an interview, it's also important to think about what you want from your career and the company you're applying to. Here are some questions you might consider asking your interviewer:

1. Career Progression

- "What does a typical career path look like within your company for someone in this role?"
- "How do you support your employees' career aspirations and growth?"
- "Are there opportunities for leadership or specialised roles within the team as one gains more experience?"

2. Learning and Development

- "What kind of learning and development resources does the company offer?"
- "How does the company stay up-to-date with the latest game development technologies and methodologies?"
- "Are there opportunities for further education or professional development workshops?"

GRADS IN GAMES TOP TIPS

Questions to ask

Through your research on the studio, you should hopefully have got together a couple of questions you want to ask. They could be about the projects being worked on, milestones or studio wellbeing.

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Remember, this is your chance to find out what you want to know too.

Another good question to ask is what the next steps are after this interview. This might have been covered but if not ask when you'll hear an outcome, what the next stage would look like or when you will be receiving feedback. It will allow you to know how things stand and what the time scales are.

Salary questions

This may have already been discussed as part of the application process and it's important that you have some awareness of what the market rate is for a junior or intern position. There is no harm in asking about salary, as this ensures that neither party is having their time wasted if it's not what is expected.

Whilst asking about salary might not be one of the first questions you ask, as it shows a primary motivation towards money, you don't want to get too far down the process to then have to withdraw.

AFTER THE INTERVIEW

- **Follow Up**: Send a thank you email reiterating your interest in the role and expressing appreciation for the interviewer's time.

- **Reflect**: Consider what went well and what could be improved for future interviews. This can help refine your interview technique.

GRADS IN GAMES TOP TIPS

Travel expenses

This varies from company to company. Generally, few pay travelling expenses for a 1st interview. It's more likely for a company to reimburse 2nd interview expenses, so retain all of your receipts. If you've been unemployed and claiming benefit or a training allowance for a period of 13 weeks or more, your local employment centre will often cover the cost. If the expense of attending an interview is an issue for you, speak to the person who has been handling the process with you as there might be something they can do to support, or switch to a remote interview.

Interviews can be nerve-wracking, but as we said at the start preparation is key. Understanding potential questions and having a clear idea of your own career aspirations will help you approach interviews with confidence.

Remember, interviews are not just for employers to learn about you; they're also an opportunity for you to find out if the company aligns with your career goals and values.

WIDER UNIVERSITY EDUCATION & CAREERS RESOURCES

In addition to course curriculum, universities offer a plethora of resources and opportunities to help you build a strong foundation for your career in the games industry. Here we're going to take a dive into different resources and experiences often available to help you maximise your chances of success, both while you study and as a post-graduate.

ENGAGING WITH CAREERS SERVICES

- **Career Advice:** Don't just read this guide! Book appointments with your university's careers service to receive personalised input on CV writing, interview preparation, and job search strategies tailored to the game development industry.

- **Workshops and Seminars:** Attend ad hoc career workshops and seminars. These often cover topics such as networking, career planning, and specific industry insights, which are invaluable for understanding the game development job market.

- **Job Fairs and Recruitment Events:** Take advantage of job fairs and recruitment events organised by your university, often run in partnership with industry partners. These events are excellent opportunities to meet employers, learn about different career paths, and secure work placements or internships.

TAKE ADVANTAGE OF YOUR UNI'S INDUSTRY LINKS

- **Guest Lectures and Industry Talks**: Many game development courses invite professionals from the industry to give talks or lectures. Attend as many of these sessions as you can to gain insights into the industry, learn about current trends, and hear first-hand experiences from established developers.

- **Networking Opportunities:** Use industry links to network with professionals. Ask your lecturers or careers service about any networking events, mentorship programmes, or industry conferences you can participate in.

- **Work Placements and Internships:** Enquire about work placements or internships facilitated through your university's games industry connections. These experiences are invaluable for gaining practical skills, building your portfolio, and establishing professional relationships.

GET INVOLVED IN GAME JAMS AND COMPETITIONS

- **Game Jams:** Participate in university-sponsored game jams. These events are fantastic for practising your skills, experimenting with new ideas, and working under tight deadlines. They also offer the chance to collaborate with peers from different specialisms.

- **Competitions and Hackathons:** Enter competitions and hackathons, especially those with an emphasis on game development. Winning or participating in these events can enhance your CV and portfolio, making you more attractive to future employers!

- **Showcasing Your Work:** Use the above opportunities to build a portfolio of work. Many universities hold end-of-year showcases or expos where you can present your projects to industry professionals and recruiters.

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BOLT-ONS FOR ENHANCING YOUR SKILLS AND KNOWLEDGE

- **Extracurricular Activities:** Join university clubs and societies related to game development or technology. These can provide additional practical experience and opportunities to work on projects outside of your curriculum.

- **Online Learning Resources:** Supplement your university education with online courses and tutorials, especially in areas not fully covered by your course. Many universities offer free access to learning platforms like Coursera or LinkedIn Learning.

- **Feedback and Critique:** Seek feedback on your work from lecturers and peers. Constructive criticism is essential for growth and improvement.

BUILDING A PROFESSIONAL ONLINE PRESENCE
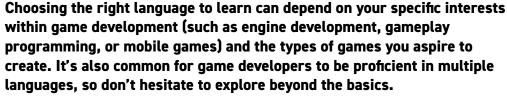
- **Portfolio Development:** Start building your professional online portfolio early. Include your best work from university projects, game jams, and personal projects (you can read more about this in the Portfolios section of this guide).

- **LinkedIn Profile:** Create and maintain a professional LinkedIn profile. Connect with classmates, lecturers, and industry professionals you meet through university events.

By actively engaging with the resources and opportunities provided by your university, you can significantly enhance your educational experience and set a solid foundation for your career in game development. The effort you put in during your university years can greatly impact your success in the games industry!

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TECHNICAL SKILLS – PROGRAMMING LANGUAGES

GENERAL TIPS FOR LEARNING PROGRAMMING LANGUAGES:

Choosing the right language to learn can depend on your specific interests within game development (such as engine development, gameplay programming, or mobile games) and the types of games you aspire to create. It's also common for game developers to be proficient in multiple languages, so don't hesitate to explore beyond the basics.

- **Start with Basics:** Understand the fundamentals of programming – variables, control structures, data structures, and algorithms.

- **Practical Application:** Apply what you learn by working on small projects or game prototypes.

- **Community and Resources:** Utilise online communities, forums, and tutorials specific to game development.

- **Stay Updated:** The tech field evolves rapidly. Stay informed about new tools and languages emerging in game development.

SPECIFIC LANGUAGES DECODED

As an undergraduate or postgraduate student studying game development, you're likely to encounter various programming languages. Each language serves different purposes in the realm of game development. Here are some of the key programming languages you might come across:

1. C++
- **Overview:** C++ is a highly efficient and flexible language, widely regarded as the standard for game development. It's known for its performance and control over system resources.

- **Use in Game Development:** Most high-performance games and game engines, like Unreal Engine (*see Engines below*), are built using C++. Its use in AAA game development is predominant.

- **Learning Curve:** Challenging for beginners due to complex syntax and memory management, but mastering it can be highly rewarding.

2. C#
- **Overview:** C# is a modern, object-oriented language developed by Microsoft. It's known for its simplicity compared to C++.

- **Use in Game Development:** Predominantly used with Unity (*see Engines below*), one of the most popular game engines for both indie and large-scale games.

- **Learning Curve:** Easier to grasp for beginners, with lots of community support and extensive documentation.

3. Python
- **Overview:** Python is known for its readability and simplicity, making it ideal for beginners.

- **Use in Game Development:** While not a primary language for mainstream game development, Python is often used for scripting and automation

within games. It's also popular in educational settings and for prototyping.

- **Learning Curve:** Very beginner-friendly, with a syntax that's easy to understand.

4. Java

- **Overview:** Java is a versatile and widely-used object-oriented language known for its portability across different platforms.

- **Use in Game Development:** While not as common as C++ or C#, Java is used in some mobile and indie game development. Games like Minecraft were originally built in Java.

- **Learning Curve:** Relatively beginner-friendly, with a strong standard library and automatic memory management.

5. JavaScript/HTML5

- **Overview:** JavaScript, often used in conjunction with HTML5, is essential for web-based game development.

- **Use in Game Development:** Used for creating interactive, browser-based games. With HTML5, developers can build games that run smoothly on browsers without the need for additional plugins.

- **Learning Curve:** Moderate. JavaScript is easy to start with, but mastering the nuances for game development can take time.

6. Lua

- **Overview:** Lua is a lightweight, high-level scripting language. Its simplicity and speed make it popular for embedded game scripting.

- **Use in Game Development:** Often used for scripting in game engines (like Corona SDK and CryEngine), allowing for rapid game prototyping and development.

- **Learning Curve:** Fairly easy to pick up, especially for those with prior programming experience.

7. UnrealScript (Legacy)

- **Overview:** UnrealScript is a scripting language developed by Epic Games for Unreal Engine, although it's now largely obsolete.

- **Use in Game Development:** Primarily used in older versions of Unreal Engine (before Unreal Engine 4).

- **Learning Curve:** Moderate, but less relevant now due to the shift to C++ in Unreal Engine 4 and later.

TECHNICAL SKILLS – GAME ENGINES

As an undergraduate or postgraduate student studying game development, you'll encounter various game engines, each with unique features and uses.

Each game engine has its strengths and is suited to different types of projects and skill levels. As a game development student, familiarising yourself with multiple engines can provide a broad understanding of the field and increase your versatility as a developer.

TIPS FOR CHOOSING THE GAME ENGINES TO WORK WITH:

- **Project Requirements:** Consider the scope and requirements of your project. Some engines are better suited for 2D games, others for 3D.

- **Learning Curve:** Some engines are more beginner-friendly than others. Unity and Godot, for example, are known for their ease of use.

- **Community and Support:** A strong community and good learning resources can be invaluable, especially when starting out.

- **Career Goals:** Think about the industry you want to enter. Learning an engine commonly used in that sector can be beneficial.

- **Experiment:** Don't hesitate to experiment with different engines to find the one that best suits your style and needs.

Here's a list of some of the most prominent game engines you're likely to come across, plus some of their key features:-

1 UNREAL ENGINE

Developer: Epic Games

Overview: Unreal Engine is renowned for its high-fidelity graphics and is widely used in AAA game development. It's known for its advanced rendering capabilities and robust multiplayer framework.

Key Features:
- Powerful visual scripting system called Blueprints.
- High-quality visualisation and cinematic content.
- Strong support for VR and AR development.

Learning Resources: Epic Games provides extensive documentation, tutorials, and a supportive community forum.

Typical Use: Ideal for high-budget, graphically-intensive games, and immersive simulations.

2 UNITY

Developer: Unity Technologies

Overview: Unity is exceptionally versatile and user-friendly, making it popular among indie developers and educators. It supports both 2D and 3D game development and is known for its ease of use and cross-platform capabilities.

Key Features:
- Extensive asset store with numerous resources.
- Supports a vast number of platforms including mobile, PC, consoles, and VR.
- Strong community support and a wealth of learning materials.

Learning Resources: Unity offers comprehensive documentation, a learning platform (Unity Learn), and active community forums.

Typical Use: Widely used for mobile games, indie projects, and educational purposes.

3 ▶ GODOT

Developer: Community-driven, open-source

Overview: Godot is a free and open-source game engine that has been gaining popularity for its flexibility and user-friendly approach. It's a great choice for beginners and those interested in open-source development.

Key Features:

- Fully integrated development environment.
- Unique scene and node system, making it easy to design both 2D and 3D games.
- No licensing fees, even for commercial use.

Learning Resources: Godot has a dedicated community with plenty of tutorials and documentation available.

Typical Use: Ideal for indie developers, hobbyists, and educational use, especially for those looking to delve into open-source development.

4 ▶ GAMEMAKER STUDIO 2

Developer: YoYo Games

Overview: GameMaker Studio 2 is popular for 2D game development, especially for those without a strong programming background. It uses a proprietary language called GameMaker Language (GML).

Key Features:

- Drag-and-drop interface alongside GML for more control.
- Rapid prototyping capabilities.
- Strong platform for developing 2D games with a focus on ease of use.

Learning Resources: Offers a range of tutorials and a supportive community.

Typical Use: Particularly good for beginners and for quickly developing 2D games.

5 ▶ CRYENGINE

Developer: Crytek

Overview: CryEngine is known for its stunning graphics and powerful rendering capabilities. It's a good choice for graphically-intensive projects.

Key Features:

- Advanced graphics and physics.
- Real-time development features.
- No royalties or licensing fees, with a "pay what you want" model.

Learning Resources: Crytek offers documentation and a learning academy with tutorials.

Typical Use: Used in AAA games and for projects where high-quality visualisation is a priority.

TECHNICAL SKILLS – EMERGING ROLES & TECHNOLOGIES

In any digital creative industry, staying abreast of emerging technologies and roles is crucial for students.

Understanding and gaining proficiency in these areas can significantly enhance your employability and versatility in the game development industry. The key is to remain adaptable and continuously seek out new learning opportunities in this dynamic field.

TIPS FOR STUDENTS

Stay Informed: Regularly read industry news, follow technology blogs, and participate in relevant online forums.

Hands-On Experience: Experiment with these technologies through personal projects, internships, or university programmes.

Networking: Attend industry conferences and workshops to connect with professionals and learn from their experiences.

Continuous Learning: Consider online courses or certifications to gain specialised skills in these emerging areas.

EMERGING TECHNOLOGIES IN GAME DEVELOPMENT

Here's a rundown of some of the key emerging technologies and roles you should keep an eye on:-

1. Virtual Reality (VR) and Augmented Reality (AR)

Overview: VR and AR are transforming gaming experiences by offering immersive and interactive environments.

Implications: As these technologies become more mainstream, there's a growing demand for developers skilled in creating VR and AR content.

Skills Needed: Familiarity with VR/AR development platforms, 3D modelling, and user experience design.

2. Machine Learning and Artificial Intelligence (AI), including Generative AI

Overview: AI and machine learning are being used to create more realistic game environments and intelligent non-player characters (NPCs).

Implications: Knowledge in this area can lead to opportunities in developing advanced game AI and dynamic, responsive game worlds.

Skills Needed: Understanding of machine learning algorithms, data analysis, and AI programming.

3. Cloud Gaming and Game Streaming

Overview: Cloud gaming allows games to be streamed directly to a device, reducing the need for powerful hardware.

Implications: This technology requires new approaches to game design and development to cater to streaming platforms.

Skills Needed: Network programming, cloud computing basics, and an understanding of streaming technologies.

4. Web3, Metaverse & Blockchain in Gaming

Overview: Web3, Metaverse and Blockchain technology are being explored by many studios, often focused on concepts like digital ownership and unique in-game assets.

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Implications: Although controversial, these technologies potentially offer new possibilities for game monetisation and asset management when implanted transparently.

Skills Needed: Knowledge of blockchain technology, smart contracts, and cryptocurrency.

5. Cross-Platform Development

Overview: Developing games that can be played across various platforms (PC, consoles, mobile) is increasingly important.

Implications: This trend requires understanding different platform constraints and opportunities.

Skills Needed: Proficiency in cross-platform game engines and an understanding of different platform requirements.

EMERGING ROLES IN GAME DEVELOPMENT

1. VR/AR Game Designer

Role: Specialising in creating engaging experiences for VR and AR platforms.

Skills: Design, user experience, and familiarity with VR/AR hardware and software.

2. Gameplay AI Engineer

Role: Developing AI algorithms that drive NPC behaviour and game environment dynamics.

Skills: AI programming, machine learning, and game design principles.

3. Cloud Gaming Engineer

Role: Focusing on the development and optimisation of games for cloud-based streaming services.

Skills: Network programming, cloud computing, and performance optimisation.

4. Blockchain Game Developer

Role: Integrating blockchain technology into games for secure transactions and unique in-game assets.

Skills: Blockchain technology, smart contract development, and cryptocurrency knowledge.

5. Prompt Engineer (for AI-Driven Games)

Role: Crafting prompts and designing interactions in games that utilise conversational AI and machine learning.

Skills: Creative writing, AI understanding, and user experience design.

TYPICAL CAREER PATHWAYS & PROGRESSIONS

Embarking on a career in game development will be an exciting journey filled with creativity, innovation, and passion. As an undergraduate or post-graduate student in the UK studying game development, you have a range of paths available to you. Here's a guide to some of the typical career paths and sources you might consider after graduation.

1 GAME DESIGN

Roles: Game Designer, Level Designer, Narrative Designer

Overview: Game designers are responsible for crafting the gameplay experience, including the rules, level layouts, storylines, and character development. They work closely with the entire development team to bring the game's vision to life.

Pathways: Start as a junior or assistant designer, moving up to lead designer or creative director positions. Specialising in areas like level design or narrative can also be fruitful.

2 GAME PROGRAMMING

Roles: Gameplay Programmer, Systems Programmer, Engine Programmer, AI Programmer

Overview: Programmers are the backbone of the game development process, writing the code that brings the game world to life. This can range from gameplay mechanics to graphics rendering to AI behavior.

Pathways: Many programmers start in more general roles before specialising in areas such as AI, graphics, or network programming.

3 ART AND ANIMATION

Roles: Concept Artist, 3D Modeller, Animator, UI/UX Designer

Overview: Artists and animators create the visual elements of the game. This includes character designs, environments, animations, and the user interface.

Pathways: Starting as a junior artist or animator, you can progress to lead artist roles, art director, or specialise in areas like 3D modelling or UI/UX design.

4 QUALITY ASSURANCE (QA)

Roles: QA Tester, QA Lead, QA Manager

Overview: QA professionals are crucial in the game development process, identifying bugs and issues before the game goes live. They ensure the game is of high quality and provides a good player experience.

Pathways: Starting as a QA tester, you can progress to lead roles and eventually QA manager, or use your in-depth game knowledge to move into design or production roles.

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5 PRODUCTION

Roles: Associate Producer, Producer, Executive Producer

Overview: Producers oversee the game development process, managing schedules, budgets, and communication between different teams.

Pathways: Start as an associate producer, managing smaller sections of the game development, and progress to managing entire projects as a producer or executive producer.

6 AUDIO ENGINEERING

Roles: Sound Designer, Audio Engineer, Composer

Overview: Audio professionals create the sound effects, music, and audio landscapes that bring games to life.

Pathways: Starting as an assistant or junior audio engineer, you can progress to lead audio roles or become a freelance composer or sound designer.

7 GAME MARKETING AND PR

Roles: Marketing Coordinator, Community Manager, PR Specialist

Overview: These roles involve promoting the game to the public and maintaining a positive relationship with the game's community.

Pathways: Starting in entry-level marketing or community roles, you can advance to lead marketing positions or specialise in areas like social media or community engagement.

8 INDIE GAME DEVELOPMENT

Overview: Many graduates choose to start their own indie game studio or work on independent projects. This path allows for creative freedom but also requires a broad skill set and understanding of the business side of game development.

Pathways: This can start from freelance work, building a portfolio, and gradually moving on to larger projects or founding your own studio.

The games industry values portfolio work highly, so continuously working on personal or collaborative projects can significantly enhance your job prospects. Be open to learning and adapting, as the industry is dynamic and constantly evolving.

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WELCOME TO THE PLAYGROUND: EXPLORING GAME DEVELOPMENT DISCIPLINES

So you've got the passion for games, the drive to create, and the itch to code mind-bending puzzles or craft heart-stopping narratives. But with so many moving parts in game development, where do you begin?

This section is your roadmap! We'll delve into the key disciplines that make up a game's DNA, from the artists who breathe life into characters to the programmers who build the intricate systems that make them tick. Get ready to meet inspiring professionals in each field, who'll share their career journeys and offer invaluable advice. We'll also explore the qualifications you might need to land your dream job and the skills that'll set you apart.

Think of it as a backstage pass to the world of game development, where creativity meets technical prowess. So, pick up your metaphorical toolbox, let's explore the exciting disciplines that await!

ANIMATION

Character Animator

Job Description: Animates characters and creatures, creating fluid and realistic movements to enhance storytelling and gameplay.

Requirements: Degree in Animation or related field. Proficiency with animation software. Understanding of body mechanics and storytelling.

Technical Animator

Job Description: Works closely with artists, designers, and programmers to develop robust animation frameworks, character rigs, and animation tools that elevate the gameplay experience.

Requirements: Degree in Animation, Game Development, Computer Science, or a related field. Strong scripting skills and experience with game engines.

FIRST HAND EXPERIENCE

Adam Kovařík, Animator, Intern, Hangar 13

How did you get your current position?

I didn't study anything related to animation, but I always wanted to do it so I self-taught how to animate by following tutorials online and studying from The Animator's Survival Kit. After graduating high school, I went straight into making my demo reel, that's when I got contacted by one of the recruiters from Hangar 13, which led me to get my first job in the video game industry.

Describe a typical day for you

Apart from animating, I get to do a lot of exciting things like collaborating with actors on mocap, brainstorming animation ideas, and hanging out with like-minded people.

What advice would you give to someone considering a career in this role?

Your portfolio is everything! A few tips:

- Tailor your portfolio to the studio you're applying to.
- It's better to have one good shot than five mediocre ones.
- If you want to know about the studio, reach out directly to the people working there whether that's on LinkedIn or another medium.
- Get to know the basics of the engines.
- Master the fundamentals before doing advanced shots.
- Patience and perseverance are key.

ART

Environment Artist

Job Description: Designs and creates immersive game environments.

Requirements: Degree in Art or Design. Skilled in 3D modeling tools. Strong understanding of composition, lighting, and environmental storytelling.

FIRST HAND EXPERIENCE

Maksim Major, World/Population Designer Intern, Hangar 13

How did you get your current position?

During my fourth year at university, my primary goal was to kickstart my professional career as a game designer. I strongly believed that hands-on experience at a company could offer more than any academic course. Consequently, after assembling my portfolio, securing an internship became my top priority. Despite reaching out to 50 game development studios across Europe, Hangar 13 was the first company that provided me with the opportunity to prove myself. I discovered the contact information of their recruiter on LinkedIn, and within a day, we scheduled an interview.

What advice would you give to someone considering a career in this role?

Having professional experience after graduation provides a significant advantage when seeking a work placement. Game Designer is a niche role within a niche industry. Therefore, it's crucial to seize any opportunity available.

Concept Artist

Job Description: Generates visual concepts for game elements.

Requirements: Degree in Fine Arts or related field. Strong drawing skills. Proficiency in digital painting tools.

Technical Artist

Job Description: Bridges the gap between artists and programmers in game development. Responsible for streamlining and improving art pipelines, integrating art assets into the game without sacrificing artistic vision or exceeding technical limits.

Requirements: Degree in Computer Science or Visual Arts. Proficiency in art and design software, understanding of programming, strong problem-solving skills, and ability to work collaboratively with artists and programmers.

FIRST HAND EXPERIENCE

Markéta Hradilová, Cinematic Editor, Hangar 13

How did you get your current position?

I'm a self-taught person who started to be interested in video editing back at school. Even though I don't have any degree in this field, I managed to gain a few years of work experience in the music video and film industry. I was purposefully searching for a job opening on Hangar 13's website, because that's where I've wanted to work for a long time.

Describe a typical day for you

My typical day consists of various tasks, which are related to creating cinematics for the game – from script breakdown, mocap preparation to final cut of the scene.

I work cross-functionally with other departments, so another part of my day consists of meetings. If I ever feel like I need a break or have a reset, I'll go for a walk with my dog who is often with me in the office, or play pool with a colleague.

What advice would you give to someone considering a career in this role?

If this is the path you want to go down for your career, know that this decision will be influenced by your passion to pursue a path in this industry.

Lighting Artist

Job Description: Designs and implements lighting systems that enhance both the aesthetic quality and playability of game levels and environments. Works closely with technical artists to develop lighting solutions that are optimised for performance while maintaining high visual quality.

Requirements: Degree in Fine Arts, Computer Graphics, or related field, or equivalent experience. Proficiency in 3D graphics software. An understanding of light, colour, contrast, shading, and lighting theory.

3D Artist

Job Description: Models, textures, and lights 3D assets, including characters, environments, and props.

Requirements: Proficiency with 3D modelling and texturing software. Understanding of the technical limitations and challenges associated with 3D art in real-time game engines. Solid grasp of anatomy, proportion, and mechanical functionality for character and environmental modelling.

VFX Artist

Job Description: Responsible for creating stunning visual effects that elevate the game experience. The work involves designing, animating, and implementing real-time effects such as explosions, fire, smoke, and magical spells.

Requirements: Strong artistic skills, with a solid understanding of colour theory, lighting, and dynamics. Proficiency in VFX software. Knowledge of real-time VFX techniques and best practices.

COMMERCIAL

Business Development Manager

Job Description: Develops strategies to help sell video games.

Requirements: Degree in Business or Marketing. Experience in sales or the games industry. Understanding of market trends.

Ecommerce/Distribution Manager

Job Description: Manages online sales and operations.

Requirements: Degree in Business or Marketing. Experience with e-commerce platforms. Knowledge of digital marketing strategies.

Business Development Analyst

Job Description: Researches and analyses market trends, new business opportunities, and potential partnerships in the gaming industry. Assists in the development and implementation of strategic business plans.

Requirements: Degree in Business Administration, Marketing, or related fields. Strong analytical and research skills. Experience in business analysis or development, understanding of the gaming market and industry trends.

Licensing Manager

Job Description: Manages licensing agreements for intellectual properties, brands, and content used within games. Negotiates contracts, ensures compliance with licensing terms, and collaborates with legal teams.

Requirements: Degree in Business, Law, or related field. Experience in licensing or contract management, strong negotiation and communication skills, understanding of intellectual property law as it applies to the games industry.

DESIGN

Game Designer

Job Description: Creates game concepts, mechanics, and storylines.

Requirements: Degree in Game Design. Creativity and problem-solving skills. Experience with game design tools.

Level Designer

Job Description: Designs game levels and environments.

Requirements: Degree in Game Design or related field. Strong spatial design skills. Familiarity with level design software.

FIRST HAND EXPERIENCE

Richard Braines, Junior Level Designer, Rebellion

How did you get your current position?

I started by studying a game design course at UCLAN. After finishing university, I wanted to get a job as an Environment Artist, but I didn't get many responses to my application, and instead secured a QA job at Frontier Developments, which gave me great industry experience. Alongside this, I worked on personal projects to improve my knowledge, and found that I was more interested in level design, so built my portfolio towards that. I then joined Rebellion and I have been here for just over a year.

Describe a typical day for you

I usually start the day by checking out the latest build of the game. Within this, I'll make changes to my areas of the level, fix any issues, or make adaptations based on feedback. Throughout the day I am constantly speaking with different artists who are dressing the areas I've designed and giving feedback to keep the design intentions present. I will also speak to my colleagues on the design team about particular features and how to best implement them into the level. We also try to make sure we have a playtest of the game to see how things play and get feedback from others on our areas.

What advice would you give to someone considering a career in this role?

Don't overload your portfolio with every piece of work you've ever done; it is better to have a few select pieces that showcase your work and are relevant to that specific opportunity. Also, don't feel like your portfolio has to be perfect before you start applying for jobs. It is very easy to only put finished work in your portfolio, but it is also good to put works in progress and blockouts that show your workflow. Finally, be willing to look at 'non-direct' routes into the industry. Roles like QA are a great way to build up knowledge of the games industry and the different disciplines involved in game development, as well as build connections that can help you secure the ideal role.

FIRST HAND EXPERIENCE

Aksels Paics, Level Design Intern, Rebellion

How did you get your current position?

As an intern, I am still studying Computer Games Design at the University of Gloucestershire. Rebellion offered two internship positions to students in my year, both in the Level Designer role. I was really keen to gain some industry experience and so my lecturer encouraged me to apply for the position. I submitted my portfolio and was invited to attend an interview, where we discussed my work and how I was keen to pursue a career in the games industry. Following this, I received confirmation that I had secured the internship and started in September 2022. I enjoyed my time at Rebellion so much, I switched to working part-time so I could continue to work alongside my studies.

Describe a typical day for you

I usually start the day with a firm idea of what I'll be focusing on. One of the things I love about game design is the sheer variety of my work and on any given day I could be working on a white-box, fixing any reported bugs or writing supporting documentation. Regardless of the task, I always start by checking that I have the latest version of the project I'm working on. While this is downloading, I check my Outlook, Microsoft Teams and Perforce to see if there is anything I can be helping the team on.

What advice would you give to someone considering a career in this role?

I think it's important to network and have a solid portfolio. The portfolio should also be focused on the specific role you want to get in the industry. So, if you want to be a Level Designer, have only level design-related projects in your portfolio, not 3D art or animation.

UI/UX Designer

Job Description: Designs user interfaces and experiences.

Requirements: Degree in Design or Human-Computer Interaction. Proficiency in design software. Understanding of player psychology.

FIRST HAND EXPERIENCE

Nancy Silsby, Junior UI Technical Designer, Rebellion

How did you get your current position?

I started by studying Video Games Design at Gloucestershire College, which I completed with a distinction. From there I attended university, where I achieved a first-class degree, and then began to work my way into the industry. Starting out can be hard, and before landing my role with Rebellion, I received hundreds of declines/no responses, attended eight interviews, three second interviews and one UI test.

Describe a typical day for you

The general process for Technical UI Designers is design, code request, implement. We start by creating wireframe and mock-ups, which are then shared with the team and adjusted following feedback. Following this, we request the code needed to implement that feature accordingly and start to build the template so we can add the code once it has been created. Then we move to bug testing and eventually in-house playtests to see what other people inside the company think of the feature and if it works as intended.

What advice would you give to someone considering a career in this role?

Keep pushing through. It's tough to get into the industry, but always update your CV and portfolio, and look to learn as much as you can from each opportunity. Also, remember to show passion and attention to detail with your work, as this is something employers will be looking for. You will definitely face knock backs during interviews early on, but always ask for feedback if you're unsuccessful so you can improve for next time. I'm always willing to help with reviews and my LinkedIn DMs are always open.

Sound Designer

Job Description: Develops and implements the audio elements of a game, such as sound effects, music, and voice overs. Works to create an immersive audio experience that complements the game's visual and narrative aspects.

Requirements: Degree or certification in Audio Engineering, Music Production, or related field. Proficiency with audio software like Pro Tools. Strong portfolio of audio work.

Narrative Designer

Job Description: Focuses on crafting the story within the game, including character development, plot, dialogue, and lore. Works closely with writers and designers to integrate the narrative seamlessly into gameplay.

Requirements: Degree in Creative Writing, Literature, or related field. Strong writing and storytelling skills. Understanding of game design and how narrative enhances the player experience.

Economy Designer

Job Description: Involved in designing, balancing, and managing game resources, currencies, item pricing, and transactions to create a rewarding and sustainable player experience.

Requirements: Strong analytical skills with a good understanding of mathematics and statistics. Experience with economy modelling and monetisation strategies in video games or similar digital products. Knowledge of player psychology and game design principles. Proficiency in data analysis tools and software.

AUDIO

Audio/Sound Engineer

Job Description: Focuses on recording and engineering sound effects and in-game audio, beyond basic sound design.

Requirements: Degree in Audio Engineering or related field. Experience in sound recording and production, proficiency with audio software and hardware.

Music/Score Composer

Job Description: Compose original music scores for various game genres, adapting style and tone to fit the game's narrative and aesthetic. Collaborate with the development team to understand the desired emotional impact and thematic goals of the music. Integrate music into the game in cooperation with audio engineers, ensuring seamless interaction with gameplay and sound effects.

Requirements: A strong portfolio showcasing compositions across various styles and genres. Proficiency in music production software. Understanding of musical theory, composition techniques, and orchestration. Ability to convey emotions and themes through music, tailoring compositions to enhance the gaming experience.

PRODUCTION & PUBLISHING

Producer

Job Description: Oversees the game development process.

Requirements: Degree in Game Production or Business Management. Strong project management skills. Experience in game development.

Publishing Manager

Job Description: Oversees the publishing process of video games, from concept approval to market release. Coordinates with developers, marketing, and distribution teams to ensure successful game launches. Manages budgets, timelines, and resource allocation.

Requirements: Degree in Business, Marketing, or related field. Experience in project management within the gaming industry. Strong leadership and communication skills, understanding of the game development and publishing cycle.

Developer Relations Manager

Job Description: Acts as the liaison between the publisher and game developers. Manages relationships, negotiates contracts, and ensures developers have the resources and support needed to complete their projects on time.

Requirements: Experience in the video game industry, preferably in a production or developer relations role. Strong negotiation and communication skills, understanding of game development processes.

FIRST HAND EXPERIENCE

Connor Arnold, Operations Executive, PlanetPlay

How did you get your current position?

I joined PlanetPlay as an Operations Executive, and in that time, I have been given opportunities to develop skills and learn how to grow within the games industry. This, along with my keen attention to detail and ability to keep things organised meant it was a natural development to move into a project Manager role for our Make Green Tuesday Moves partners. Engaging with partners is something that comes easily to me.

Describe a typical day for you

With us firmly in the swing of Make Green Tuesday Moves, my day is made up of 3 key elements: Liaising with out partners to build out their activation and ensuring the projects stay on track; making sure our studio partners have all of the resources they need and ensuring that contracts are negotiated and signed on time; managing the approval process with our partners and IP team to ensure swift and on-time delivery of assets. Outside of this, I also communicate internally with various departments to make sure IP content is delivered to studios on time, as well as making sure marketing plans are completed in time.

What advice would you give to someone seeking a career in this role?

Ensure you understand your delivery timeline for all stages of the project. You are responsible for this aspect and should keep close contact with those responsible for delivering content. Develop close relationships with those you work with, your colleagues and partners will help you deliver content and when you have good relationships, people want to deliver quality for you. Be brave, and be willing to learn and iterate - mistakes are rarely final and they are a key part of career progression if you treat them as learning opportunities.

Market Researcher

Job Description: Analyses market trends, consumer behaviour, and competitive landscapes to inform publishing decisions and strategies. The research will impact the selection, positioning, and marketing of third-party games published by a studio

Requirements: A passion for market research or a similar role. Strong analytical skills and proficiency in statistical analysis tools. Good communication skills.

FIRST HAND EXPERIENCE

Freya Gill, Academy Market Researcher, nDreams

How did you get your current position?

I studied game development focusing on narrative design at Falmouth University, and then went on to found an indie studio after graduation and took part in the Tranzfuser graduate competition ran by the UK Games Fund, which gave me a crash course in biz dev and creating pitches, which are skills I use every day at my current job!

I originally applied to another role at nDreams but ended up applying to the Market Researcher role after not getting the first job – my persistence paid off in the end!

Describe a typical day for you

I look at pitches and proposals that the third-party publishing team receives from developers and gather information about the game and the company to put into our CRM (client relationship management) system.

What advice would you give to someone seeking a career in this role?

Take any opportunity you can to learn about the business side of games. Making games is fun, but getting to see all the unique and interesting pitches we get sent and seeing how the publishing greenlight process works is fun too.

Learning what makes a good game pitch and having knowledge about CRM systems is also a big plus – I was lucky enough to receive some amazing pitch mentoring during my time at Tranzfuser, and it's really helped me with my current role.

PROGRAMMING

Programmer

Job Description: Develops the codebase for video games.

Requirements: Degree in Computer Science. Proficiency in programming languages like C++ or C#. Experience with game engines.

Gameplay Programmer

Job Description: Specialises in coding core gameplay mechanics.

Requirements: Degree in Computer Science. Strong coding skills. Deep understanding of game mechanics and player interaction.

Audio Programmer

Job Description: Specialises in implementing and optimising the audio system within the game. Works on integrating sound effects, music, and voice overs, ensuring they trigger correctly during gameplay and contribute to the overall game experience.

Requirements: Degree in Computer Science, Audio Engineering, or related field. Experience with audio programming, knowledge of sound design principles, proficiency in programming languages used for audio implementation.

Game Engine Programmer

Job Description: Specialises in developing and optimising the game engine, the core software framework used for game development. Responsible for implementing new features, improving performance, and ensuring the engine supports the creative needs of the development team.

Requirements: Degree in Computer Science or Software Engineering. Strong proficiency in programming languages like C++ and C#. Deep understanding of game engine architecture and experience in software development and optimisation.

Network Engineer

Job Description: Focuses on the development of online components of games, including multiplayer systems, server communication, and network security. Ensures smooth and secure online gameplay experiences.

Requirements: Degree in Computer Science or related field. Proficiency in network programming, understanding of online gaming architectures, experience with server-client models and network security protocols.

FIRST HAND EXPERIENCE

Iasmina Leagan, Academy Network Engineer, nDreams

How did you get your current position?

With a background in computer science, I decided to combine that with my passion for games and move to the UK, where I completed a bachelor's degree in game development.

My lecturers have always put emphasis on networking and going to events; I never realised how important it is until I went to WASD and the person reviewing my portfolio mentioned they have an opening for my specialisation, to which I applied and is now my current role.

Describe a typical day for you:

As a recent graduate, I focus on learning and absorbing lots of information. My daily tasks range from solving any functionality issues that arise to collaborating with other departments and responding to their technical needs.

My main job as a network programmer is to ensure the multiplayer aspect works accordingly, where problem-solving is key. An important aspect of my learning are my mentors, who are great at pointing me in the right direction.

What advice would you give to someone considering a career in this role?

My main advice is to find a niche and specialise further than the main areas of game development by looking into all the different roles and what skills they require.

Find which one you're most passionate about and just make something: there are plenty of resources (tutorials, courses, etc). Put work into your portfolio and don't stress on making it perfect, but make sure to highlight your strongest skills and areas of knowledge.

Furthermore, as I mentioned, network! Get involved and don't forget to reach out to the connections you make; this opens your career path to plenty of opportunities. Finally, go to game jams, play games, and don't forget to have fun.

Motion Capture Technician

Job Description: Operates motion capture technology for realistic character animations, managing equipment and data capture.

Requirements: Technical background in motion capture or animation. Understanding of animation principles and motion capture technology.

FIRST HAND EXPERIENCE

Antti Turunen, Motion Capture Technician Intern, Hangar 13 Games

How did you get your current position?

I was looking for an internship position to graduate from my university, which required me to complete a six-month long internship in a video game company or similar position related to my studies. I started looking for companies through LinkedIn and Google search to see if there were any open positions for animators or similar jobs. After sending dozens of applications, I stumbled across an open motion capture technician intern position at Hangar 13 and I decided to send an application to try my luck – and here I am now. I felt pretty lucky to get an opportunity like this.

Describe a typical day

Aside from the usual morning routine at home, I come to work, and check my emails. Depending on my inbox, I start preparing all the necessary things for what has been scheduled, such as motion capture sessions, data cleaning and preparation, studio maintenance and so on. Depending on what needs to be done, the work can stretch out over several days, so there are usually no boring days.

What advice would you give to someone considering a career in this role?

This might sound similar to what you hear elsewhere, but I really think that you need to be proactive and interested in the camera/sensor technology used for motion capture. It's amazing to see when actors are performing their moves and afterwards seeing them in the game, while knowing that you were there, behind the scenes helping to create the animations or cinematics.

Build Engineer

Job Description: Designs, implements, and maintains the build system, supporting continuous integration and deployment processes. Manages version control branches and ensures proper integration strategies are in place to maintain stability across development, testing, and production environments.

Requirements: Degree in Computer Science, Software Engineering, or a related field. A solid understanding of build and release management processes. Proficiency in scripting languages and automation tools. Familiarity with game development workflows and middleware. Good problem-solving skills and the ability to work under tight deadlines.

FIRST HAND EXPERIENCE

Martin Schenkel, Junior Build Engineer, Rebellion

How did you get your current position?

I learned programming in high school in Germany and then studied Game Development (with a focus on Game Programming) in the Netherlands. A friend then referred me for the Build Engineer role at Rebellion, which I am really enjoying.

Describe a typical day for you.

I typically start by checking to see if anything went wrong with our nightly builds and tests. If anything did go wrong, I try to address it immediately to get everything working again as soon as possible. Each morning, I also have a meeting with the producers and programmers of the project I am responsible for. In this meeting they will usually inform me about

upcoming milestones, or requests for changes to our nightly processes. Their requests usually take priority, so it is important to stay flexible. If there are no immediate tasks that popped up, I work on my regularly scheduled tasks, which are very diverse due to the nature of the Build Engineer role. They could be anything from working on our Game Launchers in C++, using Python to refine our packaging process, creating and maintaining various Batch and Groovy scripts to improve our Jenkins utilities – the list goes on.

What advice would you give to someone considering a career in your role?

Be yourself and be passionate about what you (want to) do. Be honest about what you can and cannot do, and show that you are excited to learn and improve. Be critical of your own work but, more importantly, be proud of all the things you've already achieved.

Software Engineer (Game Systems/Tools Developer)

Job Description: Focuses on developing and maintaining game development tools and systems. This may include building game editors, designing content pipelines, and optimising workflows. The role involves working closely with game developers to understand their needs and delivering robust software solutions.

Requirements: Degree in Computer Science or related field. Proficiency in programming languages such as C++ or Python, strong understanding of software development principles, experience in developing tools or systems, and a collaborative mindset.

FIRST HAND EXPERIENCE

Tomáš Janoušek, Software Engineer, Hangar 13

How did you get your current position?

I am studying for a master's degree in game development. Working alongside a classmate of mine during a project, we created a role-playing card game, which we presented to game development companies. A Studio Technical Director from Hangar 13 saw our work and recommended us to recruiters. From there, I accepted their offer since I was already searching for a job in game development.

Describe a typical day

I start the day by catching up on new messages and tasks. Then, I choose a task that has the greatest impact on our game. During its implementation I find new issues which I discuss with the quality assurance team or game designers. In the afternoon, I send my code for a review and help my colleagues.

What advice would you give to someone considering a career in this role?

I advise everyone to finish their games as one finished project has more value than a hundred ideas. Create a diverse portfolio of games you made that you can show to game companies. When hired, don't be afraid to discuss issues you see in the game with others.

Virtual Reality (VR) Developer

Job Description: Develops immersive VR games and experiences, considering unique gameplay mechanics suited for VR.

Requirements: Degree in Computer Science, Game Development, or related field. Experience with VR technology and game development platforms.

Graphics Engineer

Job Description: Designs, implements, and optimises the graphics pipeline and rendering techniques to create visually stunning and technically advanced features for games. Works closely with artists, designers, and other engineers to ensure games are immersive and high-performing across various platforms.

Requirements: Degree in Computer Science, Computer Engineering, or a related field. Strong proficiency in C++ and experience with shader programming languages. Solid understanding of 3D mathematics and physics, plus graphics APIs.

FIRST HAND EXPERIENCE

Emre Dogan, Academy Graphics Engineer, nDreams

How did you get your current position?

I found my current position through an industry event (WASD Games Show).

Describe a typical day

It starts off with some tea and then it depends on the tasks I have been assigned. Some of them are multi-day tasks and so for those days I can log on to my computer and continue where I left off. Other tasks might be given to me on the day if it is of high importance/urgency, in which case I spend the rest of my day working on those.

In terms of graphics engineering, my responsibilities can involve everything from performance profiling and optimisation, to digging into Unreal Engine source code to figure out how/why the engine does something a particular way, which I can then maybe use in my own implementation.

There is also a lot of work in optimising shaders and trying to find workarounds to common rendering techniques that will run efficiently on a mobile VR headset, such as the Quest 2/3.

What advice would you give to someone considering a career in this role?

As a Graphics Engineer, it's very important to have a visual portfolio that shows what you are capable of.

A Graphics Engineer also needs a fundamental understanding of the rendering and memory pipeline and so you need to be able to demonstrate those fundamentals in your portfolio. This could be something like working on complex shaders for a game, but the nice thing about graphics engineering is that you are not limited to a portfolio in only games; working on an engine or graphics renderer can also be very effective to show off what you can do.

But most importantly, make sure it is something that interests you. If you're playing your favourite game and wonder how they achieved a certain rendering effect, maybe try and recreate that in your own toy engine/renderer. Not only could that give you more direction in terms of a project, but the project itself will also probably turn out much more interesting because it came from something you were personally in to – not from a lecturer giving you coursework with a checklist of things to do.

Undertaking a project of that nature would also show initiative and the ability to go out and research something and implementing it, which is very important for a Graphics Engineer. This is especially true if you're going to be working on the cutting edge, where there isn't going to be a step-by-step YouTube tutorial to help you, more likely only research papers and basic ideas written down on paper.

QA & LOCALISATION

Quality Assurance Tester

Job Description: Tests games for bugs and gameplay issues.

Requirements: Attention to detail. Familiarity with gaming platforms. Strong communication skills.

Localisation Specialist

Job Description: Adapts games for different languages and cultures.

Requirements: Fluency in multiple languages. Cultural sensitivity. Experience in translation or localisation.

Localisation Tester

Job Description: Tests localised versions of video games to ensure accuracy in translation, cultural appropriateness, and consistency. Checks for linguistic errors and ensures that translations fit within the context of the game.

Requirements: Fluency in at least one language in addition to English. Attention to detail and understanding of cultural nuances. Familiarity with gaming terminologies and conventions in different languages.

Player Support Specialist

Job Description: Provides customer support to players, addressing game-related inquiries, technical issues, and feedback.

Requirements: Experience in customer support or helpdesk roles. Strong problem-solving and communication skills. Familiarity with gaming platforms.

MARKETING & COMMS

Community Manager

Job Description: Engages with and manages the game's community.

Requirements: Degree in Communications or Marketing. Strong social media skills. Experience in community management.

FIRST HAND EXPERIENCE

Richmond Zarandin, Apprentice Community Manager, nDreams

How did you get your current position?

I got my current position through a mixture of freelance work gaining experience with Content Creators and understanding what the best practices are in the industry. I networked with genuine intentions, making friends and being natural.

Describe a typical day for you.

Ideation, content planning, briefing certain creative assets and working with different teams to be efficient.

Campaign planning focusing on competitor analysis, how a campaign should be run and how we execute it.

What advice would you give to someone considering a career in this role?

Networking is highly significant as plenty of people can have similar skills to you, but you need to show that you can integrate yourself to a team and that you are great to work with.

For interviews and applications, be as prepared as you can, make sure to do specific research and cater your cover letters to the company when possible.

FIRST HAND EXPERIENCE

Molly Moore, Community Manager, Rebellion

How did you get your current position?

Ever since I was very young, I have been extremely passionate about video games. So, as a teenager, landing a retail job at a local GAME store was a great introduction to an industry I was genuinely interested in. I also began creating content in my own time, streaming on Twitch, and making both long- and short-form content for several platforms. I then landed a job as a Social Media and Influencer Manager outside of the games sector, which taught me a lot behind the scenes, including how to write social posts for channels other than my own.

After this, I moved to Rebellion as a Community Manager. This brought me back into the games sector. It has been one of the best things I've ever done.

Describe a typical day for you.

One of the many reasons I love being a Community Manager is that the role has such a variety of skills that each day can be super different. This can include anything from video editing, brainstorming our next social posts, talking to the community, reviewing influencer requests, right through to jumping on camera to film new content that will engage our audience.

What advice would you give to someone considering a career in your role?

Even though you may not have a degree in the specific sector you are looking to work in, having the confidence to put yourself out there is worth it. But you also need to be prepared; I made a whole portfolio to add some creative flare to my CV and show my passion. Also, make sure you do your research beforehand. Knowing the background of the company and its work can really benefit when it comes to being interviewed.

Marketing Manager

Job Description: Develops and implements marketing strategies for video games. Oversees advertising campaigns, public relations, and digital marketing efforts to maximise game visibility and sales.

Requirements: Degree in Marketing, Communications, or related field. Strong leadership and creative skills.

PR Executive/Manager

Job Description: Manages public image and communication.

Requirements: Strong writing and communication skills. Experience in media relations.

Brand Manager

Job Description: Oversees the development and management of a game's brand. This includes defining brand strategy, overseeing marketing campaigns, and ensuring brand consistency across all channels. The Brand Manager also analyses market trends to position the game effectively in the market.

Requirements: Experience in brand management, strong understanding of marketing principles and strategies, excellent communication and creative skills, and a deep understanding of the gaming market and audience preferences.

Digital Marketing Manager

Job Description: Develops and executes digital marketing strategies to promote games. Manages online advertising campaigns, SEO, and social media presence. Analyses digital marketing data to optimise strategies and increase game visibility and sales.

Requirements: Experience in digital marketing, SEO, and social media management. Analytical skills and experience with digital marketing tools.

Content Creator/Manager

Job Description: Creates and manages content related to video games, such as blogs, videos, and social media posts. Works to engage the community and promote the game through compelling and creative content.

Requirements: Strong writing and content creation skills. Experience in social media and content management, with a passion for gaming.

FIRST HAND EXPERIENCE

Leo Wynne, Video Editor, nDreams

How did you get your current position?

I started video editing for fun when I was around 14 years old. Now, no one needs to be starting their career that early in life, but I think it does help in showing that my passion for the industry really helped to motivate me through all the other (perhaps more boring) things involved in getting to where I am today.

That eventually led to an A-Level in Film, and before I knew it, I had graduated with a degree in Film, TV and Digital Media Production.

During my A-Level and throughout my degree as well, the biggest thing I focused on was getting experience in whatever form was available. Whether it be through volunteering, extracurricular activities or even full-time employment, I was always proactive in expanding my portfolio.

Once I'd graduated, I had a degree and a portfolio of video editing, and the games industry didn't seem like an obvious career path for me. Though I enjoyed playing games in my spare time, I hadn't yet made the connection between the promotional material that was created for video games, and my own skillset.

I spent a few months freelancing as a video editor for online creators, but was looking for something more stable and professional to bolster my skills.

It wasn't until I stumbled upon a job listing on LinkedIn that the door to the video games industry opened to me. nDreams had a new graduate position open in their Academy programme for a Video Editor, and I felt like the stars had aligned as I applied to hopefully get an interview for this new role.

Fast forward through two interview rounds, a test edit, and one final interview, and now I'm here. It's been a few months and I'm incredibly grateful. While managing to get this position did come down to a sprinkling of luck, it was ultimately my commitment to showing how proactive I am in my learning through my portfolio that I think really landed me this role.

Describe a typical day for you.

The truth is, it's quite hard to describe a typical day, because every day is different – which I know is what everyone says, but it's really true.

Some days in the office I will be attending a lot of meetings, discussing current projects and ideating with the creative team on how to shape the brand identity of our developing IPs. Other days, though, I could be up and around the office, either helping film behind the scenes footage for a new developer update, or even capturing VR footage to be used in our trailers.

And this doesn't even begin to cover my main job title, which is a Video Editor. I've helped create quirky videos for social media, rough trailer cuts for internal ideation, and even had a small part in polishing off some of the big trailers that nDreams has put out recently.

What advice would you give to someone considering a career in this role?

My main piece of advice to just be passionate, and show that you're passionate! Dedicate time not just in class, but outside of the classroom to building your portfolio when you can.

Whether it's joining a society or working at an internship, both are equally valuable in showing that you're proactive in expanding your knowledge about your field of expertise.

Research what goes into a strong portfolio, and don't be afraid to ask for advice from industry professionals when you can. Plus, don't be afraid to gush about how much you love what you do. It can feel a little embarrassing to gush to your potential employer about how you love what they do, but showing that you have a huge love for the industry and a willingness to learn new skills on the job is a surefire way to leave an impression on potential employers.

Finally, an extension to being passionate about your work is to not only curate your portfolio to your ideal role, but also be willing to learn and branch outside of your comfort zone when given the chance. Despite specialising in video editing, my role at nDreams has afforded me the opportunity to explore so many new skills relevant to alternative careers within this industry, and I feel more well-rounded as an employee as a result.

User Acquisition Specialist

Job Description: Focuses on acquiring new users for video games through various marketing and advertising strategies. Analyses user data, optimises campaigns, and collaborates with marketing teams to increase player base.

Requirements: Experience in user acquisition, digital advertising, and data analysis. Strong analytical and marketing skills.

Streaming and Influencer Relations Manager

Job Description: Manages relationships with streamers and influencers to promote video games. Develops influencer marketing strategies, negotiates partnerships, and measures the impact of influencer campaigns.

Requirements: Experience in influencer marketing or PR. Strong communication and negotiation skills, with an understanding of the streaming and influencer landscape.

Product Manager

Job Description: Oversees the development and lifecycle of a game from conception to release and post-launch. Coordinates between different departments to ensure the game meets market demands and is delivered on time and within budget.

Requirements: Strong project management and leadership skills. Experience in product management, understanding of the gaming market, and ability to analyse market trends.

Corporate Communications Specialist

Job Description: Manages communication strategies for games companies in their dealings with corporate partners and sponsors. Handles public relations, media releases, and corporate messaging to build a positive brand image.

Requirements: Experience in corporate communications or PR. Strong writing and communication skills. Knowledge of the gaming industry's corporate landscape.

ESPORTS

Esports Event Manager

Job Description: Manages esports events and tournaments.

Requirements: Organisational skills. Experience in esports event planning.

Esports Coach

Job Description: Trains and develops strategies for esports athletes and teams.

Requirements: Deep understanding of esports games and strategies. Experience in coaching or competitive gaming. Strong communication skills.

Esports Marketing Coordinator

Job Description: Develops and implements marketing strategies for esports events. Manages promotional campaigns, social media, and audience engagement efforts to increase event visibility and attendance.

Requirements: Degree in Marketing, Business, or related field. Experience in digital marketing, social media management, and event promotion. Passion for esports and gaming culture.

Sponsorship Manager

Job Description: Secures and manages sponsorships for esports events and teams. Develops sponsorship packages, negotiates agreements, and ensures sponsor visibility and satisfaction during events.

Requirements: Experience in sponsorship sales or account management. Strong negotiation skills and understanding of the esports sponsorship landscape.

Esports Community Manager

Job Description: Builds and maintains relationships with the esports community. Manages community platforms, engages with fans, and gathers feedback to improve events and fan experiences.

Requirements: Strong communication and social media skills. Experience in community management, preferably in gaming or esports.

Tournament Administrator

Job Description: Oversees the tournament structure and execution, including bracket management, rule enforcement, and coordination of matches. Ensures fair play and resolves disputes.

Requirements: Deep understanding of esports games and tournament structures. Strong organisational and problem-solving skills. Experience in tournament administration or officiating.

Esports Analyst

Job Description: Analyses esports teams, players, and tournaments. Provides insights on player performance, team strategies, and market trends in the esports industry.

Requirements: Deep knowledge of esports games and the esports industry. Strong analytical skills, experience in data analysis or performance analytics in sports or esports.

SPECIALISATION VS GENERALISATION – CHOOSING THE RIGHT ROLE FOR YOU

As we see above, game development boasts a dazzling array of roles – programmers, artists, designers, sound engineers, and more. As a student, you might be wondering: should you hone your skills in one area (specialisation) or develop a broader skillset? Here's a breakdown of each to help you decide.

The Allure of Specialisation:

Deep Expertise: Specialising allows you to delve into a specific discipline, like animation or game programming. You'll become an expert, mastering the tools and techniques of your chosen field.

Increased Demand: Studios often seek individuals with in-depth knowledge for specific roles. Specialising can make you highly desirable for those positions.

Faster Career Progression: Once established in your niche, you can quickly climb the career ladder, becoming a senior programmer, lead animator, or similar.

The Power of a Broad Skillset:

Versatility: Having a broader skillset allows you to adapt to different project needs. You can contribute across various areas, making you a valuable asset in smaller studios or early-stage development teams.

Improved Communication: Understanding multiple disciplines fosters better communication within the development team. You can bridge the gap between programmers and artists, for example.

Strong Foundation: A broad skillset equips you with a holistic understanding of the game development process, making you a well-rounded professional.

Finding the Sweet Spot:

The ideal approach often lies somewhere in the middle – the **T-shaped developer**. Imagine a 'T': the vertical bar represents your area of specialisation, and the horizontal bar signifies your broad understanding of other disciplines.

Focus on one core skill: Programming, art, design – choose your passion and become an expert.

Develop foundational knowledge: Learn the basics of other areas like game engines, scripting languages, or user interface design.

Embrace soft skills: Communication, teamwork, and problem-solving are crucial in any role.

The UK games industry is diverse, with large studios focusing on specific niches and smaller teams requiring more versatile developers.

Large Studios: If you aim for AAA (major games brands and top tier studios) development, specialising can be advantageous.

Smaller Studios: A broader skillset might be more attractive, allowing you to wear multiple hats.

Ultimately, the choice is yours! Consider your interests, career goals, and preferred work environment.

Regardless of your choice, **build a strong portfolio** (*see Portfolio section*) showcasing your expertise and versatility. Experiment with different aspects of game development during your studies to get a feel for what resonates with you.

The games industry thrives on innovation and passion. Embrace your strengths, and you'll find your place in this exciting world!

HAVE YOU CONSIDERED AN INTERNSHIP?

Although unfortunately still few and far between in the games industry, internships can be an incredibly positive experience for both intern and studio, offering a pivotal and practical step in your game development career.

The best internships can offer full time employment and benefits, usually for a fix period (typically six, nine or 12 months), including financial help with relocation and/or travel, if required.

Many internships programmes also focus on social mobility, and as such offer an important route into the games industry for people outside the typical educational pathways.

Here's a guide to help you understand the myriad upsides that such an internship can offer in terms of career opportunities and personal growth.

1. Practical Experience

Hands-On Learning: Unlike the theoretical approach often adopted by universities, an internship offers hands-on experience in a real-world environment. You'll apply your knowledge to live projects, seeing firsthand how concepts are transformed into playable experiences.

Understanding Workflow: Gain a comprehensive understanding of the game development lifecycle, including planning, execution, and post-launch support. This insight is invaluable and can only be fully understood through direct involvement.

2. Skill Enhancement

Technical Skills: You'll have the opportunity to hone your technical skills, whether it's programming, art, design, or audio, in a practical setting. Working on actual projects can fast-track your learning and understanding of tools and software used in the industry.

3. Networking

Soft Skills: Interacting with a team under real-world pressures and deadlines helps develop soft skills such as communication, teamwork, time management, and problem-solving.

Building Connections: An internship allows you to build valuable connections within the industry. The relationships you forge during this time can lead to job offers, collaborations, or mentorships in the future.

Professional Exposure: Attend industry events, meetings, and social gatherings as part of the studio team, providing opportunities to meet industry veterans and like-minded professionals.

4. Portfolio Development

Real-World Projects: Working on actual games or game-related projects provides tangible outcomes you can add to your portfolio, showcasing your skills and experience to potential employers.

Feedback and Improvement: Receive constructive feedback from experienced professionals, allowing you to refine your work and improve your portfolio's quality.

5. Industry Insight

Understanding Industry Standards: Learn about current trends, technologies, and methodologies used in the industry. Understanding these can make you more marketable to future employers.

Studio Culture: Experience the culture, pace, and environment of a game studio. This insight can help you determine the type of company you'd like to work for in the future.

6. Career Path Clarity

Role Exploration: An internship can provide a clearer picture of what various roles entail, helping you decide which path within game development suits you best.

Professional Guidance: Gain access to mentors who can provide career advice, insights into the industry, and guidance on how to achieve your professional goals.

7. Employment Opportunities

Foot in the Door: Internships often lead to job offers within the same company. Demonstrating your value as an intern can make you a top candidate for future openings.

Resume Enhancement: Having a reputable game studio on your resume boosts your employability, making you stand out to other prospective employers.

Make the Most of Your Internship

Be Proactive: Take initiative, seek out learning opportunities, and don't be afraid to ask questions.

Be Professional: Treat the internship as a real job. Be punctual, meet deadlines, and contribute positively to the team.

Network Actively: Engage with your colleagues and make an effort to build lasting professional relationships.

Reflect and Learn: Take time to reflect on your experiences, noting what you've learned and how you can apply this in the future.

An internship at a game studio is not just a learning experience, but a stepping stone to a fruitful career in game development. Embrace the opportunity, immerse yourself fully, and use the experience to pave your way to a successful career in the industry.

**BUSINESS &
ENTREPRENEURSHIP**

▶ **UNDERSTANDING
GAME
MONETISATION
& BUSINESS
MODELS**

**Understanding the business side of game development is crucial for
students aspiring to enter the industry, particularly the various models
used by developers and publishers to monetise games across PC, console,
and mobile platforms.**

In fact an understanding of these business models can be just as important
as mastering the technical aspects of game design and development:
Recognising the strengths and challenges of each model can help you make
informed decisions in your future projects and career.

Here we take a quick tour of the most common types of business models
you're likely to encounter across the most popular platforms...

1. Premium Model

Description: The premium model involves a one-time purchase to access
the game. This traditional model is common on PC and console platforms.

Key Features:

- Players pay upfront before downloading or physically purchasing the game.
- Additional revenue can be generated through the sale of DLCs
  (Downloadable Content) or expansion packs.
- Considerations: Success depends on the game's initial appeal and
  marketing efforts to drive sales.

2. Free-to-Play (F2P) with In-App Purchases

Description: Games are free to download and play, but players can make
purchases within the game for various enhancements, cosmetic items, or to
accelerate progress.

Key Features:

- Widely used in mobile games, but also prevalent in PC and some console games.
- Monetisation through microtransactions for virtual goods or currencies.
- Considerations: Balancing is key; developers must ensure that in-app
  purchases do not lead to a "pay-to-win" scenario, which can deter players.

3. Subscription Model

Description: Players pay a recurring fee to access a game or a library of
games. This model is becoming increasingly popular on PC and consoles.

Key Features:

- Can be applied to individual games (e.g., MMOs - Massively Multiplayer
  Online games) or platforms offering access to multiple games (e.g., Xbox
  Game Pass, PlayStation Now).
- Provides a steady revenue stream and can help maintain a long-term
  player base.
- Considerations: Games need to offer ongoing value to keep players
  subscribed, often requiring regular content updates or exclusive perks.

TIGA™

4. Ad-Supported Model

Description: Games are offered for free, but revenue is generated through in-game advertising. This model is most common in mobile games.

Key Features:
- Various forms of advertising include banner ads, video ads, or sponsored content.
- Often combined with in-app purchases to increase revenue streams.
- Considerations: Ads must be integrated carefully to avoid detracting from the player experience. Offering rewards for watching ads can be an effective strategy.

5. Hybrid Models

Description: Many games combine elements of different business models to maximise revenue. For example, a game might be free-to-play but offer a premium subscription option for ad-free play and additional content.

Key Features:
- Flexibility to adapt to different player preferences and maximise revenue potential.
- Common combinations include F2P with subscriptions or premium games with in-app purchases for DLCs.
- Considerations: The challenge lies in balancing the benefits offered by each revenue stream without overwhelming or alienating players.

6. Crowdfunding

Description: Funding for the game's development is raised in advance from potential players, often via platforms like Kickstarter or Indiegogo.

Key Features:
- Allows developers to gauge interest before full development.
- Backers often receive early access, exclusive content, or other rewards based on their contribution level.
- Considerations: Requires a compelling pitch and often, a prototype or demo. Developers must deliver on their promises to avoid damaging trust.

7. Early Access

Description: Players pay to access a game in its development or beta phase, providing feedback and funding ongoing development.

Key Features:
- Popular on platforms like Steam (PC) and increasingly seen on consoles.
- Allows developers to test and improve the game based on real user feedback.
- Considerations: Must ensure the early version of the game is engaging enough to justify the purchase and maintain interest through development.

Key Takeaways

Market Research: Know your audience and platform. Different models work better in different markets and platforms.

Player Experience: Whatever monetisation strategy you choose, the player experience should always be a priority. Disruptive ads or aggressive monetisation can drive players away.

Flexibility: Be open to adjusting your business model based on feedback and performance. The digital nature of gaming allows for relatively easy pivots in strategy.

STARTING YOUR OWN GAMES STUDIO

Starting an indie development studio is an ambitious and exciting endeavour, offering the chance to bring your own creative visions to life.

Transitioning from academia to entrepreneurship involves careful planning and consideration.

Here's our top-level guide to the key considerations for aspiring indie developers...

1. Develop a Clear Vision and Goals

Game Concept: Begin with a clear and feasible game idea. Consider what makes your game unique and how it will stand out in the market.

Studio Goals: Define what you want to achieve with your studio beyond a single game. Consider your long-term vision and values.

2. Understand the Market

Research: Investigate current trends, potential competitors, and market demands. Understand where your game and studio fit within the broader industry landscape.

Target Audience: Identify and understand your target audience. Knowing who you're developing for is crucial for marketing and design decisions.

3. Plan Your Business

Business Model: Decide on a business model for your game(s) and studio (see Business Models section). Will you pursue a premium, free-to-play, or another monetisation strategy?

Financial Planning: Create a detailed budget that covers development costs, marketing, and living expenses. Consider funding options such as savings, loans, crowdfunding, or investment.

Legal Considerations: Familiarise yourself with legal requirements for starting a business in the UK, including company registration, tax obligations, and intellectual property rights.

4. Build a Skilled Team

Roles and Skills: Identify the roles and skills needed for your studio and its projects. Early on, team members may need to wear multiple hats.

Recruitment: Consider collaborating with classmates, joining game development communities, or hiring freelancers to fill skill gaps.

Team Dynamics: Ensure your team shares your vision and work ethic. Effective communication and a positive team culture are essential for success.

5. Develop Your Game

Prototype Early: Start with a prototype to validate your game concept. Use feedback to iterate and refine your idea.

Project Management: Adopt project management tools and methodologies to keep your development process organised and on track.

Quality Assurance: Plan for thorough testing to ensure your game meets quality standards. Bug fixes and polish are crucial before launch.

6. Market Your Game

Marketing Plan: Develop a marketing plan early in development. Use social media, game trailers, and press releases to build anticipation and awareness.

Community Engagement: Build a community around your game. Engage with potential players through forums, social media, and events.

Launch Strategy: Plan your game's launch carefully. Consider timing, platforms, and how you'll gather feedback and support players post-launch.

7. Prepare for Challenges

Flexibility: Be prepared to adapt your plans based on feedback, market changes, and other challenges.

Resilience: Starting a studio and developing a game is a marathon, not a sprint. Persistence and resilience in the face of setbacks are vital.

8. Leverage University Resources

Mentorship and Advice: Seek advice from your lecturers, industry contacts, and university's entrepreneurship support services.

Networking: Use your time at university to build a network of peers, mentors, and industry contacts.

Skills Development: Take advantage of opportunities to learn additional skills that will be valuable in running a studio, such as business management, marketing, and leadership.

Starting an indie development studio is a significant undertaking, but with passion, planning, and perseverance, it's an achievable dream.

Use your time at university to lay the groundwork, developing both your technical skills and your understanding of the business side of game development. Remember, success as an indie studio doesn't come overnight, but with dedication and hard work, you can make your mark – many people before you have done just that!

FUNDING YOUR OWN GAMES STUDIO

Starting your own game development studio is an exciting prospect. However, understanding the financial landscape will be crucial to turning your dream into reality. Here's a guide to help you navigate the various sources of funding and tax relief available in the UK.

1. Video Games Expenditure Credit, Government Grants and Loans

Video Games Expenditure Credit (VGEC): VGEC is replacing the previous Video Games Tax Relief. It allows studios to claim a deduction from their taxable profits. TIGA has been integral in lobbying for more support for UK studios and played the critical role in securing the introduction of Video Games Tax Relief in 2014.

UK Games Fund: Aimed at supporting early-stage game development projects and talent, the UK Games Fund can provide grants to help get your project off the ground. It's particularly aimed at small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs).

Innovate UK: This organisation provides funding and support for innovative projects, including in the digital and creative sectors. Keep an eye out for relevant competitions and grants that your studio might qualify for.

Start Up Loans: Backed by the government, these can provide personal loans for business purposes, alongside free mentoring and support for starting your business.

2. Private Investment

Angel Investors: These are affluent individuals looking to invest in promising start-ups in exchange for equity or a share in the profits. Networking events, online platforms, and industry meet-ups can be good places to meet potential angel investors.

Venture Capital: If you're aiming big, venture capitalists (VCs) invest significant sums into start-ups with high growth potential. Be prepared: VCs typically expect a detailed business plan and may want a significant stake in your company.

Crowdfunding: Platforms like Kickstarter, Indiegogo, or Fig allow you to raise funds directly from consumers by pre-selling your game or offering other incentives. This method can also serve as a marketing tool, building a community and gauging interest in your game.

3. Regional and Local Support

Local Enterprise Partnerships (LEPs): These partnerships between local authorities and businesses no longer formally exist and have been integrated into local authority activities since April 2024.

Creative England: Offers various forms of support and investment for creative industry enterprises located outside London, including the games industry.

4. Incubators and Accelerators

Games-specific programmes: Look for incubators and accelerators specifically aimed at game developers, such as those run by your own university, industry bodies, or private companies. They can offer not only funding but also valuable mentoring, office space, and networking opportunities. Such as the Games London Accelerator

General tech incubators: More generic tech or business incubators can also provide support, especially if your game has a strong technological or innovative component. Innovate UK is one such example, operating across multiple technology sectors (see above).

5. Tax Considerations and Support

R&D Tax Credits: If your game development involves innovative scientific or technological processes, your company might be eligible for R&D tax credits, which can reduce your tax bill or result in a cash payment from HMRC.

Local Authority Grants: Some local councils offer grants or support to businesses starting up in their area, especially if they contribute to local economic growth or employment. This has replaced the LEP system nationally (see above)

Tips for Securing Funding:

Prepare a solid business plan: Clearly outline your business model, market research, financial projections, and how the funds will be used.

Build a prototype: Having a playable prototype can significantly increase your chances of securing funding, as it demonstrates the viability of your game.

Network: Attend industry events and join game development communities to meet potential investors and partners.

Seek advice: Don't hesitate to ask for help from mentors, advisors, or other developers who have successfully secured funding.

Remember, while securing funding is an essential step in starting your indie game studio, it's also important to maintain control over your creative vision and business decisions.

Carefully consider the terms of any investment or support and how they align with your studio's goals and values.

STUDIO, HYBRID AND REMOTE WORKING IN GAMES

The video game industry is renowned for its creativity and cutting-edge technology. And within this dynamic world lies another crucial element: work style. Gone are the days of mandatory office hours for many studios. Today, graduates entering the industry have a number of work arrangements to choose from – office, hybrid, and remote. Each offers unique advantages and drawbacks, and the ideal set-up depends on your personality and other personal factors. Let's delve into the nitty-gritty of each model to help you choose which works for you.

STUDIO-BASED

The traditional 'office' environment offers a structured and collaborative atmosphere. Imagine brainstorming level design ideas in a whiteboard session or celebrating a coding milestone with your team. Physical proximity fosters spontaneous interactions, strengthens relationships, and facilitates quick problem-solving.

Benefits:

Enhanced Collaboration: Studio settings are great for fostering teamwork. Brainstorming sessions, code reviews, and in-person meetings become seamless, allowing for a free flow of ideas and real-time feedback.

Social Interaction: Building camaraderie and friendships with colleagues is a natural outcome of studio life. Networking opportunities abound, creating a sense of belonging and boosting morale.

Structured Environment: Offices provide a dedicated workspace with minimal distractions, allowing for focused work. Clear boundaries between work and personal life can be established.

Learning and Mentorship: Being surrounded by experienced colleagues provides valuable learning opportunities through casual interactions and mentorship programmes.

Negatives:

Commute: Time spent commuting can be significant, impacting work-life balance and overall wellbeing.

Limited Flexibility: Office schedules are typically fixed, offering less flexibility for personal appointments or errands.

Distractions: While an office fosters collaboration, it can also be a breeding ground for distractions – from chatty colleagues to tempting snack breaks.

Health Concerns: Sitting for extended periods can lead to health issues.

HYBRID: THE BEST OF BOTH WORLDS

Hybrid work offers a blend of office and remote work, allowing you to split your time between the two. This model provides the benefits of collaboration and social interaction while granting flexibility for focused work or personal commitments.

Benefits:

Flexibility and Control: Hybrid schedules allow you to tailor your work environment to specific tasks. Need focused coding time? Work from home. Brainstorming a new game mechanic? Head to the office.

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Improved Work-Life Balance: Reduced commuting time and the ability to manage personal errands during remote days lead to a better work-life equilibrium.

Cost Savings: Employees can save on commuting expenses and potentially reduce childcare costs with flexible schedules.

Increased Productivity: Studies suggest that hybrid models can lead to increased productivity as employees can choose the environment that best suits their work style.

Negatives:

Communication Challenges: Clear communication becomes crucial in a hybrid model. Establishing communication tools and protocols is essential to maintain smooth collaboration between remote and in-office teams.

Social Isolation: Working remotely can lead to feelings of isolation. Setting clear boundaries between work and personal life ensures you maintain connections with colleagues.

Requires Self-Discipline: Time management becomes crucial in a hybrid model. Establishing a clear schedule and sticking to it is key to maintaining productivity.

FULLY REMOTE

Remote work offers the ultimate in flexibility. Imagine working from your home office, a co-working space, or even a beachside cafe (with a strong internet connection, of course). This model empowers you to design your ideal work environment, fostering a sense of autonomy and freedom. However, it is worth noting that games development studios will often be working on secret, unannounced games – or collaborating on third party licences and projects – so secure working environments are required.

Benefits:

Ultimate Flexibility: Remote work allows you to structure your workday around your personal needs and preferences. Whether it's starting early to avoid distractions or taking midday breaks for exercise, remote work provides unparalleled control.

Reduced Costs: Remote employees save on commuting expenses.

Improved Work-Life Balance: Remote work eliminates commuting time, allowing for more personal time and a better work-life balance.

Location Independence: Remote work lets you live anywhere with a reliable internet connection, opening doors to relocation options or travel opportunities.

Negatives:

Isolation and Loneliness: Working remotely can lead to feelings of isolation and loneliness. Proactive efforts are needed to maintain social connections with colleagues.

Distractions: A home environment can be full of distractions, from household chores to family members. Setting clear boundaries and establishing dedicated workspaces are crucial.

Communication Challenges: Maintaining clear communication with colleagues can be challenging in a fully remote environment. Regular team meetings and video calls are essential.

Career Development: Remote work may limit opportunities for mentorship and informal learning that can occur more easily in the studio.

Communication Counts

Regardless of the work model you choose, strong communication skills are essential. Mastering communication tools like video conferencing, instant messaging, and project management software will ensure smooth collaboration and project success.

Finding Your Fit

Ultimately, the best work model depends on your individual preferences and career goals. Consider your personality, how you work best under pressure, and your need for social interaction. Don't be afraid to have an open conversation with potential employers to discuss their work arrangements and flexibility options.

THE FUTURE OF WORK IN GAMING

The video game industry is at the forefront of adopting flexible work models. As technology evolves and communication tools become even more sophisticated, we can expect to see a continued rise in hybrid and remote work options. With a clear understanding of the benefits and drawbacks of each model, you'll be well-equipped to choose the work style that empowers you to thrive in this exciting and ever-changing industry.

Bonus Tip: During the interview process, inquire about the company culture and how they support remote or hybrid teams. This will give you valuable insight into how well they've adapted to flexible work arrangements.

CHOOSING THE RIGHT STUDIO FOR YOUR FIRST STEP INTO GAMES

It's an exciting time to be embarking on your dream career. But with a vast landscape of studios out there, selecting the perfect fit can feel daunting. This guide will help you to choose a studio that aligns with your passions, fosters growth, and fuels a fulfilling career. As a starting point, it is worth taking a look at the TIGA Accredited Star Employers, as well as the studios and other companies who have been celebrated in the TIGA Games Industry Awards.

CULTURE: FINDING YOUR TRIBE

A game studio's culture is the lifeblood of its success and your daily experience. Here's what to consider:

Crunch Time: The industry has been known for crunch periods – intense, extended work hours before a game's release. Most studios now have a healthier approach, but it's worth doing your research into whether crunch culture exists within a company.

Work-Life Balance: Game development is a passion, but burnout is a risk. Seek a studio that prioritises employee wellbeing and offers flexible work arrangements. Look for generous annual leave policies and initiatives that promote a healthy disconnect.

Collaboration versus Competition: Do you thrive in a collaborative environment or a more competitive one? Some studios prioritise teamwork, while others encourage individual excellence. Identify your working style and seek a studio that fosters it.

Inclusivity and Diversity: A diverse studio brings a wealth of perspectives to the table, leading to richer game experiences. Look for companies that actively promote inclusion and have a strong track record of hiring from a variety of backgrounds.

Celebrated Employers: TIGA Star Employers are games studios who have demonstrated excellence and best practice in employment. In addition, the TIGA Games Industry Awards celebrate the best studios in the UK games industry, with categories championing those committed to workplace wellbeing, EDI and more.

TOOLS AND RESOURCES:

During your research, explore these avenues to understand a studio's culture:

Glassdoor Reviews: While not always perfect, employee reviews on Glassdoor offer valuable insights into the studio's work environment.

Social Media: Follow the studio on social media to get a feel for their company culture. Look for employee testimonials highlighting positive experiences.

Industry Awards: Studios recognised for workplace culture are likely great places to work. As mentioned above, TIGA Star Employers are games studios who have demonstrated excellence and best practice in employment. In addition, the TIGA Games Industry Awards celebrate the best studios in the UK games industry, with categories championing those committed to workplace wellbeing, EDI and more. It is well worth taking a look at the studios who are recognised with these accolades.

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GAMES: WHERE YOUR PASSION MEETS PURPOSE

The types of games a studio develops should excite you. Here's how to find a good match:

Genre Focus: Do you have a soft spot for RPGs, or are you a die-hard strategy enthusiast? Research a studio's portfolio to see if their projects align with your interests. Working on games you genuinely enjoy fosters motivation and a sense of purpose.

Technical Challenges: Consider the technical challenges you'd like to tackle. Studios specialising in mobile games will have different needs compared to those working on AAA console titles.

Innovation versus Established Franchises: Do you crave ground-breaking innovation or want to contribute to established franchises? Knowing your preference will help you find the right studio.

CAREER DEVELOPMENT: SHARPENING YOUR SKILLS

A good studio invests in its employees and offers opportunities for continuous learning. Explore these aspects:

Mentorship Programmes: Does the studio offer mentorship programmes that pair you with experienced developers? This is a fantastic way to learn and grow in your chosen field.

Training & Development: Look for studios committed to employee development. This could include access to online courses, conferences, or workshops – a good starting point is to take a look at the TIGA Accredited Star Employers, as well as the studios and other companies who have been celebrated in the TIGA Games Industry Awards.

Career Paths: Research the studio's internal structure and see if it offers clear career progression for your chosen specialisation.

PROACTIVE STEPS TO LANDING YOUR DREAM JOB

Beyond research, take proactive steps to get noticed by your dream studio:

Network & Build Relationships: Attend industry events, connect with developers on social media like LinkedIn, and participate in game jams to build relationships and showcase your skills.

Portfolio Powerhouse: Ensure your portfolio is polished and reflects your talent. It should showcase your best game development work and highlight your strengths.

Ace the Interview: Go beyond technical skills. Research the studio and prepare questions that demonstrate your genuine interest in their work and culture.

REMEMBER, THE DECISION IS A TWO-WAY STREET

Interviews are also a chance for you to assess the studio. Don't be afraid to ask questions about their culture, projects, and opportunities for growth.

It's All About Fit

Choosing the right game studio is like finding the perfect character class: a combination of skills, environment, and growth potential that unlocks

your full potential. By prioritising aspects like culture, game type, and career advancement, you'll be well-equipped to embark on a satisfying and successful journey in the games industry. Remember, your first job is a stepping stone on a long road. Choose a studio that fuels your passion and equips you with the skills to carve your own unique path in the ever-evolving world of games.

Bonus Tip: Don't limit yourself geographically. With the rise of remote work opportunities, the world is your oyster. Explore studios in different locations, keeping in mind time zone differences and potential relocation needs.

A CAREER FOR ALL: DIVERSITY & INCLUSION IN GAMES

Like some other industry sectors, the video games space hasn't always been as diverse as it could have been. However, significant strides have been made in the past few years, with the industry striving for inclusivity, and there is a huge opportunity for you to be part of this positive change.

Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) aren't just buzzwords – they're essential for a thriving games industry. Here's why:

Untapped Creativity: Studios composed of homogenous teams risk creating games that cater only to their own limited perspectives. Diversity injects fresh ideas, fosters innovation, and leads to richer, more relatable stories.

A Broader Audience: The gaming audience is incredibly diverse. By including characters and stories that resonate with under-represented groups, studios tap into a wider market and create a more welcoming space for all.

Improved Business Outcomes: Studies show that diverse teams outperform homogenous ones. A focus on EDI strengthens a studio's bottom line by encouraging innovation and attracting a wider talent pool.

WHY DIVERSITY MATTERS: BEYOND FAIRNESS

HOW STUDIOS ARE CHAMPIONING INCLUSION

Initiatives Driving Change:

Diversity Recruitment Programs: Studios are implementing targeted recruitment strategies to reach out to under-represented communities at universities, conferences, and online forums.

Employee Resource Groups (ERGs): ERGs provide a safe space for employees from similar backgrounds to connect, share experiences, and advocate for change within the company.

Mentorship Programmes: Mentorship programmes pair experienced developers from under-represented groups with aspiring newcomers, fostering guidance and career development.

Unconscious Bias Training: Studios are providing their staff with unconscious bias training to identify and address biases that might influence hiring decisions.

WHAT YOU CAN DO TO MAKE A DIFFERENCE

Advocate for Diverse Teams: During the interview process, highlight the importance of working on a diverse team and how your background can contribute to the studio.

Challenge Bias: Speak up if you witness or experience bias in the workplace.

Support EDI Initiatives: Participate in ERGs, attend workshops on diversity, and be an ally to colleagues from under-represented groups.

Champion Diverse Stories: Push for projects that reflect a wider range of experiences and characters.

Network with Diverse Developers: Seek out role models and mentors from under-represented groups and build your professional network.

Consider Specialisation in Accessibility: Become an expert in game accessibility, ensuring all players can enjoy your creations regardless of ability.

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RESOURCES FOR ASPIRING DEVELOPERS FROM UNDER-REPRESENTED GROUPS

Women in Games: womeningames.org
Out Making Games: outmaking.games
BAME in Games: bameingames.org
Autistica Play: autistica.org.uk/get-involved/support-us/autisticaplay

THE FUTURE OF INCLUSIVE GAME DEVELOPMENT

Building a truly inclusive games industry requires continuous effort. As a future games industry professional, you have the power to shape a more welcoming and diverse landscape. By embracing EDI initiatives, you'll contribute to richer game experiences, a thriving industry, and a more equitable world where everyone feels like they can belong and contribute their unique talents.

LIFELONG LEARNING & ADAPTABILITY

The world of games development is a dynamic one with creativity, innovation, and the constant push of technological boundaries. But like any high-octane adventure, it demands constant adaptation. New tools, engines, and design philosophies emerge at speed, and the skillset that landed you your first job might not be enough to propel you to the next level. Here's where the concept of lifelong learning comes in, a crucial skill for every aspiring games industry professional.

WHY LIFELONG LEARNING MATTERS

Imagine a world where your favourite game still relied on cassette tapes. That's the reality of complacency in a field evolving as rapidly as games development. Here's why continuous learning is the golden key to success:

- **Stay Ahead of the Curve:** New technologies like VR/AR, cloud gaming, and artificial intelligence (AI) are redefining the gaming landscape. By staying updated, you'll be equipped to leverage these advancements and contribute to truly groundbreaking projects. Think about how AI can be used to create dynamic in-game environments, populate worlds with believable NPCs, or even personalise gameplay experiences.

- **Master Multiple Skillsets:** The games development landscape is diverse. Learning new skills, whether it's 3D modelling, animation, or audio design, can make you a more valuable asset and open doors to exciting opportunities. Perhaps you could delve into the world of procedural generation, using AI to create endless variations of levels or characters.

- **Sharpen Your Existing Skills:** The tools you use today will inevitably evolve. By continuously learning and honing your existing skills, you'll ensure you remain proficient and relevant in the job market. Maybe your coding expertise could be applied to developing intelligent AI systems or crafting sophisticated animation tools.

- **Embrace New Design Philosophies:** Game design trends shift constantly. Staying abreast of these changes allows you to create more engaging and innovative experiences that capture the imagination of players. Consider the rise of narrative-driven games or the growing popularity of player-driven content creation – both areas where innovative design approaches are key.

LIFELONG LEARNING: A TOOLKIT FOR CONTINUOUS GROWTH

With an understanding that lifelong learning is essential, here's a toolkit to equip you for success:

- **Online Courses:** The internet is a treasure trove of online courses, tutorials, and certifications offered by industry leaders, universities, and independent creators. Look for courses specifically focused on AI in games, where you can learn how to implement and utilise this powerful technology.

- **Industry Events:** Conferences, workshops, and game jams offer invaluable opportunities to learn new skills, network with peers and industry professionals, and stay up-to-date on the latest trends.

- **Blogs and Publications:** Follow industry blogs, B2B industry news sites, and the social media channels of studios to keep your finger on the pulse of the industry.

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- **Community Engagement:** Join online communities and forums dedicated to game development. Engaging in discussions can be a fantastic way to learn from others, share ideas, and troubleshoot challenges.

- **Personal Projects:** Experimentation is key to learning and growth. Don't be afraid to dedicate time to personal projects.

BEYOND TECHNICAL SKILLS: ADAPTING YOUR MINDSET

Lifelong learning isn't just about acquiring technical skills. It's also about cultivating a growth mindset, a way of thinking that embraces challenges and sees opportunities for development in every obstacle. Here's how to cultivate such a mindset:

- **Embrace Feedback:** Don't shy away from constructive criticism. See feedback as an opportunity to identify areas for improvement and learn from others' experiences.

- **Be Comfortable with the Unknown:** The games development landscape is constantly in flux. Embrace the unknown, be curious about new trends like AI, and view challenges as opportunities to learn and grow.

- **Network with Diverse Developers:** Surround yourself with people who have different skillsets and perspectives. This exposure broadens your knowledge base and fosters creativity.

- **Step Outside Your Comfort Zone:** Don't be afraid to experiment and try new things. Take on tasks that push you outside your comfort zone, perhaps by participating in game jams.

LIFELONG LEARNING – YOUR KEY TO SUCCESS

The game development industry thrives on innovation and adaptability. By embracing lifelong learning, you'll equip yourself with the skills and knowledge to navigate its ever-evolving landscape. Remember, the journey of a game developer is a continuous adventure, fuelled by curiosity, a thirst for knowledge, and the unwavering desire to create experiences that ignite the imaginations of players. So, keep learning, keep adapting, and keep pushing the boundaries of what's possible.

SOFT SKILLS: THE UNSUNG HEROES OF GAMES DEVELOPMENT

While coding prowess and artistic mastery are crucial in games development, there's another set of skills that often get overlooked – soft skills. These seemingly intangible qualities like communication, teamwork, and interpersonal relationships are the cornerstones of a successful career in the games industry.

Imagine a team of brilliant programmers who can create groundbreaking AI systems, but struggle to explain their complex code to artists. Or envision a team of artists with breathtaking visual ideas that are impossible to integrate due to communication gaps. This is where soft skills bridge the divide between individual talent and a cohesive, productive team. Here's why soft skills are the unsung heroes of game development:

WHY SOFT SKILLS MATTER MORE THAN YOU THINK

- **Bridging the Gap Between Roles:** Studios are a confluence of diverse skillsets. Programmers need to communicate effectively with artists, designers have to articulate their vision to engineers, and everyone needs to collaborate with project managers. Strong communication and interpersonal skills ensure everyone is on the same page and working towards a common goal.

- **Building Trust and Fostering Collaboration:** Strong team dynamics are essential for success. Soft skills like active listening, empathy, and conflict resolution create a positive work environment where team members trust, respect, and support each other. This leads to smoother collaboration, a more enjoyable work experience, and ultimately, better games.

- **Adaptability and Problem-Solving:** Games development is an ever-evolving landscape. Soft skills like flexibility, a willingness to learn, and critical thinking equip you to adapt to changing project requirements, troubleshoot challenges, and find creative solutions.

- **Standing Out From the Crowd:** In a fiercely competitive industry, strong soft skills set you apart from other talented individuals. The ability to communicate clearly, collaborate effectively, and build positive relationships with colleagues can significantly impact your career trajectory.

DEVELOPING YOUR SOFT SKILL ARSENAL: A PRACTICAL TOOLKIT

Understanding the importance of soft skills, here's a toolkit to help you hone them:

Communication:

- **Practice Active Listening:** Pay attention to what others are saying, ask clarifying questions, and avoid interrupting.

- **Tailor Your Communication:** Adjust your communication style based on your audience. Use technical jargon with programmers but tailor explanations for artists with a more visual approach.

- **Be Clear and Concise:** Get your point across efficiently, avoiding ambiguity.

Teamwork:

- **Embrace Collaboration:** View your colleagues as partners, not competitors. Work together to achieve common goals.

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- **Be Reliable and Respectful:** Meet deadlines, contribute actively, and treat everyone with respect. Offer help to colleagues who are struggling.
- **Embrace Different Perspectives:** Value diverse ideas and approaches. Learn from others and be open to constructive criticism.
  Interpersonal Skills:
- **Develop Emotional Intelligence:** Understand and manage your own emotions, and recognise the emotions of others.
- **Maintain a Positive Attitude:** A positive outlook keeps the team motivated and encourages a more enjoyable work environment.
- **Be Respectful, Even When Disagreements Arise:** Approach differences of opinion with respect and a willingness to find solutions.

REMEMBER, SOME RELATIONSHIPS WON'T CLICK

Despite your best efforts, you'll encounter people with whom building a strong working relationship might be difficult. Here's how to navigate such situations:

- **Identify the Issue:** Try to understand the root cause of the conflict. Is it a communication style clash, or a difference in working styles?
- **Direct Communication (if possible):** If appropriate, approach the person directly and attempt to find a solution. Focus on the issue, not personalities.
- **Document and Seek Support:** If direct communication fails, document the situation and seek guidance from a supervisor or HR representative.
- **Focus on Yourself:** While it's important to maintain professionalism, you can't control the behaviour of others. Focus on your own actions, communication style, and professionalism. Remain positive and concentrate on contributing to the team's success.

THE TAKEAWAY: SOFT SKILLS ARE YOUR SUPERPOWER

Soft skills might not appear as flashy as coding expertise or artistic mastery, but they are the glue that holds successful games development teams together. By actively developing your communication, teamwork, and interpersonal skills, you'll become a valuable asset to any studio and pave the way for a fulfilling career in the exciting world of game development. Remember, the journey of a game developer is a collaborative one, and your soft skills are the key to building positive working relationships, fostering innovation, and ultimately, creating truly groundbreaking games.

Bonus Tip: Look for opportunities to practice and refine your soft skills outside of work. Volunteer for projects, participate in online forums, or join games development communities. These experiences will enhance your communication skills, build your network, and give you valuable insights into the industry.

IMPOSTER SYNDROME & HOW TO CONQUER IT

Imposter Syndrome is something that affects many individuals, both inside and outside of games. Here, we take a look at what it is, its impact and, most importantly, how to overcome it and unleash your full potential.

WHAT IS IMPOSTER SYNDROME?

Imposter syndrome, also known as the 'imposter phenomenon', is a psychological pattern characterised by persistent feelings of self-doubt and a fear of being exposed as a fraud. Despite evidence of their competence and accomplishments, individuals with imposter syndrome struggle to enjoy their success. They attribute their achievements to luck, external factors, or simply fooling others.

WHY IS IMPOSTER SYNDROME COMMON IN GAMES DEVELOPMENT?

The games development industry thrives on excellence. Aspiring developers are constantly exposed to the work of industry giants, which sometimes leads to a sense of inadequacy. Here's why imposter syndrome is particularly prevalent in this field:

- **The Cult of the Genius:** The industry often romanticises the idea of the lone genius developer who single-handedly creates ground-breaking games. This portrayal can make aspiring developers feel they don't measure up.

- **The Ever-Evolving Landscape:** The rapid pace of technological advancements and ever-changing design philosophies can create a feeling of being constantly behind the curve, fuelling self-doubt.

- **Focus on Portfolio Perfection:** The pressure to showcase a flawless portfolio can lead to perfectionism and a fear of putting imperfect work out there, hindering growth and learning opportunities.

- **Comparison Trap:** Surrounded by talented peers and bombarded with online content, it's easy to fall into the trap of comparing yourself to others. This constant comparison fuels self-doubt and undermines achievements.

THE IMPACT OF IMPOSTER SYNDROME

Imposter syndrome can have a significant negative impact on your career trajectory:

- **Reduced Confidence:** Constant self-doubt can erode your confidence, making it difficult to take risks, pursue opportunities, or advocate for yourself.

- **Performance Anxiety:** The fear of exposure can lead to performance anxiety, hindering your ability to perform at your best during interviews or presentations.

- **Decreased Productivity:** Perfectionism and procrastination fuelled by imposter syndrome can lead to decreased productivity and missed deadlines.

- **Burnout:** The constant pressure to prove yourself can lead to burnout, hindering your creativity and enjoyment of game development.

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CONQUERING THE IMPOSTER WITHIN: PRACTICAL STRATEGIES

Imposter syndrome doesn't have to hold you back. Here are some practical strategies to combat it and embrace your true potential:

- **Recognise Your Achievements:** Maintain a record of your accomplishments, big and small. When self-doubt creeps in, revisit this list as a reminder of your capabilities.

- **Reframe Negative Thoughts:** Challenge your inner critic. Instead of "I'm not good enough," try "I'm still learning and growing".

- **Focus on Progress, Not Perfection:** Embrace the iterative nature of games development. Focus on progress, not achieving immediate perfection.

- **Celebrate Your Wins:** Acknowledge and celebrate your victories, both big and small. Take pride in your work and your accomplishments.

- **Find Your Support System:** Surround yourself with positive and supportive peers, mentors, and colleagues who believe in you and your potential.

- **Focus on Your Journey:** Instead of constantly comparing yourself to others, focus on your own journey as a games industry professional. Track your progress and celebrate your personal growth.

- **'Fake it Till You Make It':** Sometimes, acting confident can actually lead to increased confidence. Step outside your comfort zone and trust that you have the skills to succeed.

REMEMBER, YOU'RE NOT ALONE

Imposter syndrome is a common experience, not a reflection of your abilities. Countless successful game developers have battled these feelings. Here are some inspirational stories:

- **Neil Druckmann (Co-President, Naughty Dog):** "Even now, I sometimes feel like an imposter. It fuels the desire to keep learning and growing."

- **Amy Hennig (Director, Uncharted series):** "Imposter syndrome is a universal feeling. The key is to acknowledge it and keep moving forward."

THE TAKEAWAY: EMBRACE YOUR STRENGTHS

Imposter syndrome can be a formidable opponent, but remember, you are not alone. By acknowledging its presence, reframing negative thoughts, and celebrating your achievements, you can overcome these feelings and unleash your true potential. Embrace lifelong learning, focus on progress, and surround yourself with a supportive network.

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NETWORKING & BUILDING CONNECTIONS

While technical skills and a killer portfolio are important, your network – the connections you build with others in the industry – can be a true game-changer. Here we look at the power of networking, strategies for overcoming nervousness, and practical tips for building relationships that will propel your career forward.

▶ WHY NETWORKING MATTERS: IT'S NOT WHO YOU KNOW, IT'S WHO KNOWS YOU

Imagine landing your dream job at a leading studio, not because of a perfect resume, but because a connection you made at a conference recognised your talent and potential. This is the power of networking – building meaningful relationships within the game development industry. Here's why networking is more than just exchanging business cards:

- **Opening Doors to Opportunities:** Networking can open doors to exciting job opportunities. Studios often rely on their network for referrals, and having connections can put you at the top of the pile when a position opens up.
- **Gaining Valuable Insights:** Experienced professionals in your network can offer invaluable insights into the industry, career advice, and guidance on navigating the development process.
- **Staying Informed About Industry Trends:** By connecting with others, you'll stay abreast of the latest trends, technologies, and opportunities within the game development landscape.
- **Building a Support System:** The game development journey can be challenging, and a strong network provides you with a support system of like-minded individuals who can offer encouragement and share your passion.

▶ CONQUERING NETWORKING ANXIETY: YOU'RE NOT ALONE

The prospect of networking can be daunting, especially for introverts or those new to the industry. Here's the truth – everyone feels nervous sometimes. But these nerves don't have to hold you back. Here are some strategies to overcome networking anxiety:

- **Shift Your Mindset:** Instead of viewing networking as intimidating, see it as an opportunity to connect with people who share your passion. Focus on building relationships, not getting a job.
- **Start Small**: Don't overwhelm yourself with large industry events right away. Begin by attending smaller meet-ups or online forums related to your area of interest.
- **Prepare Conversation Starters:** Have a few icebreakers ready, like "What are you currently working on?" or "What game are you most excited about right now?"
- **Focus on Active Listening:** Don't be afraid of silences. Actively listen to the person you're talking to and ask thoughtful questions to demonstrate your genuine interest.
- **Be Yourself:** Don't try to be someone you're not. Authenticity goes a long way in building genuine connections.
- **Follow Up After Connecting:** After meeting someone interesting, send a follow-up email thanking them for the conversation and mentioning something you discussed to solidify the connection. Connect with them on LinkedIn.

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NETWORKING STRATEGIES

Now that you're ready to conquer your nerves, here are some practical tips for building a strong network in the game development community:

- **Attend Industry Events:** Conferences, workshops, and game jams offer fantastic opportunities to meet other games industry professionals, learn new skills, and network with peers.
- **Join Online Communities:** Engage in online communities like forums, Discord servers, and social media groups dedicated to the games industry. Participate in discussions, share your work, and connect with like-minded individuals.
- **Leverage Social Media:** Follow industry influencers, studios you admire, and games development publications on platforms like Twitter and LinkedIn. Participate in relevant discussions and showcase your skills and passion through your online presence.
- **Volunteer Your Skills:** Contributing your skills to game jams or independent projects is a fantastic way to gain experience, showcase your abilities, and network with other developers.

REMEMBER, NETWORKING IS A MARATHON, NOT A SPRINT

Building a strong network takes time and consistent effort. Don't get discouraged if you don't land your dream job after one conversation. Focus on fostering genuine connections, staying engaged with the community, and providing value to your network. As you continue to develop your skills and network, your connections will organically grow, opening doors to exciting opportunities and propelling your career forward.

Bonus Tip: Always approach networking with a giving mindset. How can you help others in your network? Offering your skills, knowledge, or simply connecting them with others can go a long way in developing strong and mutually beneficial relationships.

Embrace networking as an essential part of your game development journey.

THE POWER OF PRACTICAL EXPERIENCE

Like any art form, mastering the craft of games development requires more than just theoretical knowledge. Here's where practical experience comes in – the hands-on application of your skills that bridges the gap between learning and creating ground-breaking games.

Here we explore the importance of practical experience, delving into various avenues like work experience, independent projects, competitions, and game jams, and how these experiences can propel you towards your dream career in game development.

WHY PRACTICAL EXPERIENCE MATTERS: BEYOND TEXTBOOKS AND TUTORIALS

Textbooks and online tutorials are fantastic resources for acquiring knowledge, but they can't replicate the real-world challenges and rewards of games development. Practical experience provides a unique learning environment with several key benefits:

- **Skills in Action:** Theoretical knowledge comes alive when you apply it to real projects. Practical experience allows you to hone your programming skills, refine your artistic vision, and learn valuable problem-solving techniques relevant to the industry.

- **Building a Portfolio:** A strong portfolio showcasing your practical work is a powerful tool for landing your dream job. Every project, large or small, contributes to your portfolio and demonstrates your capabilities to potential employers.

- **Collaboration and Teamwork:** Game development is rarely a solo endeavour. Practical experience provides opportunities to collaborate with other developers, learn how to communicate effectively, and navigate the dynamics of a team environment.

- **Building Confidence:** There's no substitute for the satisfaction of overcoming challenges and completing a project you're passionate about. Practical experience builds a sense of accomplishment and boosts your confidence in your abilities.

AVENUES FOR PRACTICAL EXPERIENCE: WHERE TO BEGIN YOUR DEVELOPMENT JOURNEY

The great thing about practical experience is that it comes in many forms. Here's a look at some avenues you can explore to gain valuable hands-on experience:

- **Work Experience:** Internships, freelance gigs, or even entry-level positions at studios can provide invaluable real-world experience. Start by looking for opportunities that align with your interests and skillset.

- **Independent Projects:** Don't wait for someone to hand you a project. Develop your own game in your free time! This allows you to experiment, explore your creative vision, and build a portfolio piece that showcases your unique skills.

- **Game Jams:** These short, intense development sprints are a fantastic way to gain experience under pressure, brainstorm ideas, and collaborate with other developers. Hone your skills, learn new tools, and have fun in a fast-paced environment.

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- **Open Source Projects:** Contributing to open-source game development projects allows you to learn from experienced developers, work on a larger codebase, and gain valuable experience contributing to a collaborative effort.

▶ EVERY EXPERIENCE COUNTS: BUILDING YOUR JOURNEY

Every practical experience, big or small, contributes to your development as a games developer. Here are some additional tips to get the most out of your practical experience:

- **Set Realistic Goals:** Start with smaller projects and gradually work your way up to more complex ones. This ensures a sense of accomplishment and prevents feeling overwhelmed.

- **Document Your Journey:** Keep a log of your projects, challenges you faced, and solutions you discovered. This not only serves as a learning record but also showcases your thought process to potential employers.

- **Seek Feedback:** Don't be afraid to share your work with others and solicit constructive criticism. Feedback helps you identify areas for improvement and grow as a developer.

- **Embrace Learning:** Every project presents new challenges. Approach practical experience with a growth mindset, constantly seeking opportunities to learn new skills and tools.

▶ THE TAKEAWAY: PRACTICAL EXPERIENCE IS YOUR KEY TO SUCCESS

The world of games development is a competitive one. Practical experience sets you apart from other aspiring developers. By actively seeking opportunities to put your skills to the test, collaborate with others, and build a diverse portfolio, you gain a significant advantage in the job market. Remember, every project you complete, every line of code you write, and every challenge you overcome contributes to your growth as a game developer. Embrace practical experience, and it will propel you towards an exciting and fulfilling career in the game development industry.

Bonus Tip: Don't be afraid to step outside your comfort zone. Explore different areas of games development, whether it's programming, art, design, or audio. This well-roundedness will make you a more valuable asset to any studio.

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