

UNIVERSITY OF KENT

Programme Specification

Please note: This specification provides a concise summary of the main features of the programme and the learning outcomes that a typical student might reasonably be expected to achieve and demonstrate if he/she passes the programme. More detailed information on the learning outcomes, content and teaching, learning and assessment methods of each module can be found in the programme handbook. The accuracy of the information contained in this specification is reviewed by the University and may be checked by the Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education.

PG Cert/PG Dip/MA Game Art

1. Awarding Institution/Body	University of Kent
2. Teaching Institution	Pearson College London (PCL) (Escape Studios)
3. School responsible for management of the programme	School of Engineering and Digital Arts
4. Teaching Site	Pearson College London (PCL)
5. Mode of Delivery	Full-time
6. Programme accredited by	N/A
7. Final Award	MA, PG Dip, PG Cert
8. Programme	PG Cert Game Art PG Dip Game Art MA Game Art
9. UCAS Code (or other code)	
10. Credits/ECTS value	60 (30 ECTS) PG Cert 120 (60 ECTS) PG Dip 180 (90 ECTS) MA
11. Study Level	Level 7
12. Relevant QAA subject benchmarking group(s)	
13. Date of creation/revision (<i>note that dates are necessary for version control</i>)	Sept 2015/v0.2
14. Intended Start Date of Delivery of this Programme	January 2016

15. Educational Aims of the Programme

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The programme aims to:

The MA Game Art has been created as a response to industry demand for new creative talent and is focused on developing and nurturing your skills and creativity in preparation for a career as a game artist.

This year-long programme will allow students to develop their skills whilst working on collaborative projects just as they will in the industry. With excellent industry links and guidance from PCL/ES partners, students will benefit from learning the principles behind the creation of environments, interfaces and visual effects to a professional standard as well as the practical vocational experience needed to secure a job.

Using the PCL/ES experience-based pedagogy, students will develop a deep understanding of their technical craft, work in teams on professional projects, and learn how to produce beautiful interactive experiences. Critical reflection will be integral to the learning process, as well as an understanding and application of leadership and team dynamics theories and practices.

A key feature of this programme is the study of the games industry itself, providing students with the knowledge and understanding of current and emerging business models. This will allow them to progress either artists in an established studio or as an independent developer creating their own game.

16 Programme Outcomes

The programme provides opportunities for students to develop and demonstrate knowledge and understanding, qualities, skills and other attributes in the following areas.

On completion of the PG Certificate, students will be have:

K. Knowledge and Understanding of:

- K1 Advanced processes and techniques involved in the creation of immersive and engaging video games.
- K2 The trends in professional game development and their impact on the artistic elements of game production.
- K3 The relationship between code, design, art and prototyping in the production process.

Skills and Other Attributes

I. Intellectual Skills in:

- I1 Critically evaluating and selecting artistic and technical solutions in relation to video game production for a variety of platforms.

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- I2 Analysing the impacts of design, art and technical issues and iterating to inform new solutions.
- I3 Employing agile practices in relation to games production in a variety of industry contexts.

S. Subject-specific Skills:

- S1 Using industry tools and techniques to a professional standard to create 2D and 3D content for real-time interactive games for a variety of platforms.
- S2 Using lighting, materials and textures to deliver aspects of a game design for a variety of platforms.
- S3 Creating/using art and design bibles for the process of constructing visual tools to inform production.

T. Transferable Skills:

- T1 Researching, designing, planning and delivering a project that can adapt to meet a shared objectives within resource constraints.
- T2 Communicating and presenting to a variety of audiences in a technical and creative context.
- T3 Providing and responding effectively to critical feedback.

On completion of the PG Diploma, in addition to the PG Cert learning outcomes, students will be have:

K. Knowledge and Understanding of:

- K4 The tools and techniques used to create vfx for real-time interactive systems.
- K5 The use of industry production tools in a collaborative working environment.

Skills and Other Attributes

I. Intellectual Skills in:

- I4 Critically evaluate, select and deploy advanced techniques for producing an interactive game environment and assets.

S. Subject-specific Skills:

- S4 Evaluating and using advanced Games and VFX tools and techniques to produce real-time effects and simulations.

T. Transferable Skills:

- T4 Research-based problems combining design, art and technical issues.
- T5 Defining and monitoring scheduling of complex resources to deliver a collaborative project.

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On completion of the MA, in addition to the PG Diploma learning outcomes, students will have:

K. Knowledge and Understanding of:

- K6 The theory and practice of current and emerging techniques used in a professional video game production.

Skills and Other Attributes

I. Intellectual Skills in:

- I5 Critically evaluating practices for a complex project with reference to peer schedules and critical pathways of production.

S. Subject-specific Skills:

- S5 Apply a range of complex production skills to a major production project.
S6 Advanced practical skills in the implementation of a complex video game production.

T. Transferable Skills:

- T6 Advanced research, technical, critical analysis and problem solving abilities in the absence of complete or definite information.
T7 Managing resources to a high standard under varying constraints and conditions.

Teaching/learning and assessment methods and strategies used to enable outcomes to be achieved and demonstrated

Escape Studios / Pearson College London's pedagogy has been developed over 13+ years of programme delivery, enhanced with reference to emerging and established educational theory, and refined through feedback from industry professionals and pilot projects. There are four principles that constitute the pedagogy:

Create Beautiful Things (Art & Design)

- Learning and applying fundamental art and design skills to creative digital projects.
- Developing an artistic voice as the new generation of visual artists.
- Shaking up the industry by prizing originality, curiosity, and innovation.
- Absorbing influences from outside the classroom.

Learn a Craft (Craft)

- Learning and honing a specific craft through hard work and a good eye.
- Challenging programmes that are rigorous, practical, and unpredictable; like a hybrid of an art and design school, an apprenticeship, and a start-up.
- Recognising the importance of learning from the masters, whilst developing a style and signature.

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- Developing the cognitive skills that are required to work at a high level in the video games industry.

Work in Teams (Process)

- Building strong communities of practice: supportive, professional, challenging, honest.
- Work in groups with their own culture and community feel. Being part of the wider Escape Studios / Pearson College London community, which is in turn part of the global professional community.
- Learning from each other, by giving and receiving feedback, sharing skills, and collaborating on projects as leaders and members.
- Having an equal stake in the learning experience. This is democratic education, not autocratic.

Make it Viable (Business)

- Respecting and contributing to the rich video games community.
- Working with state-of-the-art technology on realistic projects to produce work that would make studios money.
- Following a realistic production/development pipeline in all projects.
- Understanding the business case for the things that are being made.
- Having an in-depth knowledge and application of professional techniques so that graduates are useful in the industry.

Key Teaching Methods (all phases)

Tutors

Students are assigned a tutor who will provide individualised pastoral support for them over the course of the programme. Each semester, tutors and tutees will meet in a 1-to-1 tutorial to talk about their progress through the programme; to discuss personal and professional development; and feedback on individual and group work from art & design, craft, process, and business perspectives.

Tutors will track the progress of tutees and record any issues relevant for discussion at progression panels and post-module review sessions.

Modules

The programmes are built around a logical series of intensive learning experiences, each of which are structured as specific modules. These are either Craft-focused or Project-focused. Students are expected to be engaged in their study whether it be in studio/class full-time or as independent directed study, full time, just like in a professional studio.

Tutors lead the Craft modules, teaching students everything they will need to know to create high-quality visual and interactive experiences. This is where the students initially gain most of their knowledge and subject specific theory and skills and setting this in context, and the environment fosters an apprentice-like experience, learning

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from and working with master craftsmen. The focus here is on the individual and their skills, with feedback coming from tutors, peers, and self-reflection.

Tutors and industry professionals lead the Project modules, giving students the chance to work on projects to a client brief, put their skills to practice, and collaborate through a production or development pipeline. These modules are the primary way that the intellectual and transferable skills are developed. The focus here is on the individual's role in a larger collaborative brief, whether that be a student team project or in the context of a wider collaborative environment. Feedback comes from tutors, peers, self-reflection, and the industry. These Projects are generally divided into three phases: concept, making, and retrospective.

Delivery Modes

Skills Sessions

Tutor-led, intensive periods in the classroom where students learn the theory and technical skills that are essential for their specific craft. These sessions are very practical, with students following demonstrations and working on tutor-defined exercises to develop their theoretical understanding and skills of their craft, providing a strong link between theory and practice. Such is the complexity of the software used in the creation of visual effects, computer animations, and video games, we have refined this effective and efficient way of supporting students to gain mastery.

Tutorials

These are tutor-led sessions that are not focused on technical skills, but on developing subject specific knowledge and broad transferable competencies. These include discussions and presentations around key theories, critical reflection and feedback activities (dailies and notes), team building & group dynamics workshops, and pastoral elements.

Tutorials will be held with the entire cohort, working groups, or on a 1-to-1 basis, as appropriate.

Studio Time

Practical, open, and largely collaborative periods in the studio, where students work on individual assignments or group projects without tutor intervention. Generally there will be a studio assistant available to support with technical issues, but these are periods where students learn how to apply their lessons from the Skills Sessions to an industry-appropriate challenge or brief.

Self-Directed

For the remaining time students will manage their own learning process. Working on individual or group projects as is appropriate, following the recommended reading, implementing tutor recommendations from 1-to-1 tutorials, or pursuing side projects for personal and professional development.

Environment

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Learning takes place in a flexible, open space which can be configured in different ways to support collaboration whilst allowing space for individual, quiet working.

E-learning

Technical support is provided through online tutorials and recorded teaching sessions. These cover specific skills and can be accessed by students at anytime from anywhere.

Dailies / Notes

Success in the creative industries depends on regular and effective critical feedback on work-in-progress. During Craft and Project modules tutors and teams will run regular group sessions where individuals can get peer feedback from creative and technical points of view. This will be regular, constructive, and formative, supporting students to produce the best quality work possible before the summative assessment points at the end of modules.

Retrospectives (Retros)

The term is borrowed from agile production methods, and is essentially a designated period for reflection and analysis. Students will take part in retros, reflecting as individuals and through group discussion on the work produced and the module as a whole. They will explain and discuss their lessons, and define actions they will take in future work. Retros play an important role in students developing a keen understanding of themselves, how they work, what their role is in teams, and how they can improve their practice.

Studio Meetings

These short meetings will take place on a regular basis. Tutors, students, and key stakeholders will attend. This is an important space for updates, changes, feedback, showing work, special projects, solving problems, and celebrations.

Student Rep

To ensure that the needs and concerns of the students are being taken into account throughout the programme, we will appoint one student representative from each pathway. They will be responsible for collecting and feeding back to the delivery team at post-module review sessions.

Key Assessment Methods

All assessment is 100% coursework.

Team project work will be assessed according to the following table:

Assessor	Tutor	Industry	Peer	Self
Component	Product			Retrospective
Weighting	25%	25%	25%	25%

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Group/individual	Group	Individual
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All marks are moderated by the tutors. Peer and self-marked components are moderated after a group or 1-to-1 discussion respectively.

Student Output

Proposal

Students present a detailed plan of how they will meet a specific brief, either as individuals or in a group. The plan will be presented in written form or through an in-person presentation.

Prototype

Often presented midway through a project, or for a shorter project. Students will work individually or in groups to create a prototype of a VFX shot, computer animation, or video game. They will present this in person, or online with written/audio commentary.

Product

Presented at the end of a project, or for a longer project. Students will work individually or in groups to create a high quality VFX shot, computer animation, or video game that fulfils a specific brief. They will present this in person, or online with written/audio commentary.

Portfolio

Cumulative work produced over a period of time, showing influences, work in progress, progression, and final products. Portfolios will demonstrate the breadth and depth of each student's craft. Almost exclusively for individual work, this output will form an essential part of each student's CV/showreel.

Retrospective

Individuals and groups reflect on the product and the process of a module as well as the theoretical and contextual underpinning of the process. Assessing their own performance in relation to the learning outcomes and assessment criteria. This is presented as a written journal or a recorded group discussion, for assessment and moderation.

Assessment Types

Studio Crit.

A discursive assessment method where students present work in front of the whole group. This is often used for formative assessment, but also used for summative assessment when a mix of tutor, industry, and peer input is required.

Written and/or verbal feedback and grades are given in line with the module learning outcomes and assignment assessment criteria.

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Panel Crit.

A selected panel (which can include tutors, peers, and industry) hears presentations from groups and individuals and gives written and/or verbal feedback in line with the learning outcomes and assessment criteria.

1-on-1 Crit.

An individual or group presents work to a tutor or peer for feedback and/or grading. This is a private and in-depth assessment method. The assessor provides written and/or verbal feedback in line with the learning outcomes and assessment criteria.

Portfolio Review

Tutors (and sometime industry professionals) provide specific feedback on individual portfolios. Often in person, and always with the view to improving and making recommendations for further learning and development work. As always, the assessor provides written and/or verbal feedback in line with the learning outcomes and assessment criteria.

Retrospective Review

Individuals and groups submit the results of a project retrospective. This will generally be in written form for individuals, and as recorded audio with summary notes for groups. The assessor provides written and/or verbal feedback in line with the learning outcomes and assessment criteria.

Craft Modules

- There will be at least as many formative assessment points as summative points throughout each module. These will be organised by tutors and incorporate feedback from tutors, peers, and self-reflection.
- Summative assessment points will be at the end of the module, incorporating feedback from tutors, moderated peer and moderated self-reflection, with assessment criteria derived from the learning outcomes.
- Feedback and grades will often be delivered in person to facilitate discussion and understanding, and will always followed up in written form for clarity and quality.

Project Modules

- Formative assessment points will be at the end of the *concept* phase and midway through the *making* phase, incorporating feedback from tutors, peers, and self-reflection.
- Summative assessment points will be at the end of the *making* phase, incorporating feedback from tutors, and moderated feedback from industry professionals and peers. A moderated self-reflection following the *retrospective* phase will make up part of final grade. All assessment criteria derived from the learning outcomes and the project brief.
- Feedback and grades will largely be delivered in person to facilitate discussion and understanding, and will always be followed up in written form.

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Management

Tutors will manage the assessment process, with oversight of the Programme Lead, Deputy Vice-Principal and the validating partner team.

Resubmission

Following any failed module, in accordance with University of Kent regulations, students have a maximum of two further attempts to successfully pass the module. Students who have failed a module will be given an opportunity for resubmission following detailed feedback and discussion with tutors.

For more information on the skills developed by individual modules and on the specific learning outcomes associated with any fallback award relating to this programme of study, see the module mapping.

17 Programme Structures and Requirements, Levels, Modules, Credits and Awards

This programme is studied over one year full-time.

Each programme is divided into three phases. Phase 1 comprises modules to a total of 60 credits and involves 12 weeks of intensive classroom tuition. Phase 2 is a further 60 credits based around a further 6 weeks intensive tuition together with a collaborative project. Phase 3 comprises a 60 credit project/dissertation module. Students must successfully complete each module in order to be awarded the specified number of credits for that module. One credit corresponds to approximately ten hours of 'learning time' (including all classes and all private study and research). Thus obtaining 180 credits in an academic year requires 1,800 hours of overall learning time. For further information on modules and credits refer to the Credit Framework at <http://www.kent.ac.uk/teaching/qa/credit-framework/creditinfo.html>

Each module and programme is designed to be at a specific level. For the descriptors of each of these levels, refer to Annex 2 of the Credit Framework at <http://www.kent.ac.uk/teaching/qa/credit-framework/creditinfoannex2.html>. To be eligible for the award of a Masters degree students must obtain 180 credits, at least 150 of which must be Level 7. Students who obtain 60 credits will be eligible for a PG Certificate, students who pass 120 credits will be eligible for a PG Diploma.

This programme has flexible start dates which may vary from year to year. There will typically be one start date in the Autumn, which will be in August, September or October and another at the start of the calendar year, which will be in January or February.

	Code	Title	Level	Credits	Term(s)
	Phase 1				
	Compulsory Modules				
GA7001	PRSN7004	Game Art – Foundations	7	30	1
GA7002	PRSN7003	Game Art – Advanced	7	30	1
	Phase 2				
	Compulsory Modules				
GA7003	PRSN7002	Games Art – FX and Technical Art	7	30	2
PR7001	PRSN7000	Game Collaborative Project	7	30	2
	Phase 3				
	Compulsory Modules				
PR7002	PRSN7001	Game Production Project	7	60	Summer

18 Work-Based Learning

Disability Statement: Where disabled students are due to undertake a work placement as part of this programme of study, a representative of the University will meet with the work placement provider in advance to ensure the provision of anticipatory and reasonable adjustments in line with legal requirements.

Work-based learning is not structurally part of the programme, but learning takes place in an environment that replicates that of a typical creative industries studio. This is particularly relevant to the project work, where students work in teams to industry practices and procedures, ensuring that they have experience of the workplace environment during their studies.

19 Support for Students and their Learning

- Escape Studios / Pearson College London induction programme
- Programme/module handbooks
- Learning resources & support - <https://www.pearsoncollegelondon.ac.uk/student-experience/undergraduate/learning-support.html>
- Student Support & Wellbeing
<https://www.pearsoncollegelondon.ac.uk/study/postgraduate/student-support.html>
- PCL Student Association <https://www.pearsoncollegelondon.ac.uk/student-experience/undergraduate/pcsa.html>
- Careers and Employability <https://www.pearsoncollegelondon.ac.uk/working-with-business/career-coaching.html>

20 Entry Profile

The minimum age to study a degree programme at the university is normally at least 17 years old by 20 September in the year the programme begins. There is no upper age limit.

20.1 Entry Route

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For fuller information, please refer to the College prospectus

Normal requirements are for an Undergraduate Honours Degree at 2.1 level or equivalent in a related discipline together with a portfolio of creative work. Other qualifications or experience in lieu of formal qualifications will be considered by the admissions team and where appropriate an appropriate case will be made to the admissions office.

Students who do not have English as a first language will need to demonstrate their proficiency with appropriate qualifications or evidence of having been taught English previously. Typical English Language Level: average 6.5 IELTSs, minimum 6.0 reading and writing.

Pearson College welcomes applications from people of all backgrounds and abilities. Those with a disability are encouraged to discuss the nature of their disability with the Programme during the application process. The College has a process to assess additional learning needs, providing support and where appropriate 'reasonable adjustments' in assessment.

20.2 What does this programme have to offer?

This programme has been designed through close consultation with leading educators and industry professionals in the games industry. During this research period it became clear that we needed to create a programme in which technical skills and collaborative working practices were equally weighted. Students would learn their craft in intensive modules, then apply and consolidate the skills they've learned in a practical project.

A block delivery model was devised to ensure that the students could focus on either craft or project work, and to make those projects feel like real industry projects. Pearson College London / Escape Studios' existing pedagogy was adapted to incorporate elements of project-based delivery.

The core design team met advisors at Degree Concept Team (DCT) sessions and visited them in their studios and offices. Partner organisations include: Sony Computer Entertainment Europe, Media Molecule, Royal College of Art, ustwo and Future Games of London. The industry and academic partners are really engaged, and will assure the relevance of this programme by delivering workshops, giving talks, setting briefs, and providing feedback for the students. This connection with the industry, combined with the expert instruction from existing tutors provides a powerful and practical student learning experience.

The assessment methods employed in this programme have been developed to mirror industry practice as far as possible. We balance feedback from tutors and industry experts, with peer feedback and self-assessment. It is crucial that students learn how to accept and work with feedback from their superiors and peers, as this will be the norm when they work in industry. They also need to develop a keen self-critical eye. To be able to step back from their work and see what they could improve, and to have the ability look at themselves and their working practices, and make changes where necessary.

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Graduates of the programme will be ready for work. They will have a deep technical knowledge of their craft, and those who have completed the MA will have the ability to work in teams and collaborate with people in adjacent roles and fields. They will understand the business of the games industry, and will bring all of these aspects together to create beautiful visual experiences.

20.3 Personal Profile

Applicants should exhibit:

- A passion for the games industry
- An intellectual interest in the history, theory and practice the video games industry
- An ability to adapt and change with varying circumstances
- A thirst for knowledge and a desire to solve complex problems
- An enthusiasm for collaborative and team working
- A desire to shape the future of video games

21 Methods for Evaluating and Enhancing the Quality and Standards of Teaching and Learning

21.1 Mechanisms for review and evaluation of teaching, learning, assessment, the curriculum and outcome standards

- Student module evaluations and feedback questionnaires
- Annual programme and module monitoring reports, see <http://www.kent.ac.uk/teaching/qa/codes/taught/annexe.html>
- External Examiners system, see <http://www.kent.ac.uk/teaching/qa/codes/taught/annexk.html>
- Periodic programme review, <http://www.kent.ac.uk/teaching/qa/codes/taught/annexf.html>
- Annual staff appraisal
- Peer observation
- Quality Assurance Framework, <http://www.kent.ac.uk/teaching/qa/codes/index.html>
- QAA Higher Education Review, see <http://www.qaa.ac.uk/InstitutionReports/types-of-review/higher-education-review/Pages/default.aspx>

21.2 Committees with responsibility for monitoring and evaluating quality and standards

Committees at the University of Kent include:

- School Learning and Teaching Committee
- Faculty Learning and Teaching Committee
- Faculty Board
- Learning and Teaching Board
- Board of Examiners

Committees at Pearson College London include:

- Staff-Student Liaison Committee
- Progression and Retention Committee
- Review and Enhancement Committee
- Academic Board

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21.3 Mechanisms for gaining student feedback on the quality of teaching and their learning experience
<ul style="list-style-type: none">● Staff-Student Liaison Committee● Postgraduate Taught Experience Survey (PTES)● Student module evaluations● Postgraduate Student Representation System (School, Faculty and Institutional level)
21.4 Staff Development priorities at PCL include:
Staff Development Programme that includes: <ul style="list-style-type: none">● PGCHE requirements● HEA (associate) fellowship membership● Annual appraisals● Academic Practice development opportunities● Professional body membership and requirements (where appropriate)● Programme team meetings● Research seminars● Conferences● Study leave● Opportunities to return to practice and engage with industry
22 Indicators of Quality and Standards
<ul style="list-style-type: none">● PCL QAA Higher Education Review Plus report May 2014 (http://www.qaa.ac.uk/en/ReviewsAndReports/Documents/Pearson%20College/Pearson-College-HER-Plus-14.pdf)● QAA Educational Oversight Report May 2015 (http://www.qaa.ac.uk/en/ReviewsAndReports/Documents/Pearson%20College/Pearson%20College-EO-AM-15.pdf) <p>Future indicators after the commencement of the programmes will include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">● Annual External Examiner reports● Annual programme and module monitoring reports (UoK and PCL)● Result of PCL periodic review● Result of University of Kent Periodic Review
22.1 The following reference points were used in creating these specifications:
<ul style="list-style-type: none">● QAA UK Quality Code for Higher Education● University of Kent's School and Faculty plan● PCL Plan/Learning and Teaching Strategy