

Game Design, M.A.

Degree Offered

- Master of Arts

Nature of the Program

The MA in Game Design is a 30-credit low-residency program for emerging game designers seeking to expand and build upon their conceptual, production, and project management skills, as well as to further their professional credentials.

The curriculum includes a 3-course foundational sequence that addresses game design, game theory and game production. In addition a series of 1-credit micro-courses allows each candidate to advance a specialized skill set. All courses are only available online, however a campus residency component brings all students and faculty together every summer for a dynamic games conference and game jam. Early in the degree course sequence, a capstone project is conceived and planned out for which the candidate designs and develops a functional and playable game prototype in order to complete the degree. For the capstone project each candidate serves simultaneously as the director of their project while also working in a production specialization role for a peer's capstone project. The final requirement of the program is that each student present their capstone game project at their final residency.

Our selective enrollment ensures regular individual contact with dedicated, diverse faculty who are committed to a sustained professional exchange with each student. Students must be able to apply and communicate a diverse body of knowledge of historical, cultural, contemporary, and aesthetic issues to their professional practice. Students are expected to articulate and defend their capstone project proposal and final prototype within the context of the contemporary game field.

Admissions for 2025-2026

The application deadline occurs annually on January 15. There is a two-step process for graduate applications.

Step 1: Apply (<http://graduateadmissions.wvu.edu/>) to West Virginia University Graduate School online. This application will require you to upload your transcripts, resume, letter of intent, three letters of recommendation and pay an application fee. Applicants must have had a minimum undergraduate grade point average of 2.75 to be considered for admission.

Step 2: Submit your portfolio (<https://wvuart.slideroom.com/>) to the WVU School of Art & Design.

Submit the following material for the degree you are interested in:

MA in Game Design: Portfolio: Up to 5 representative samples of your work with a total viewing duration of no longer than 60 minutes, including interactive projects, game prototypes, game components, graphic imagery, virtual environments, virtual character studies, photographs, or video documentation of the same. WVU School of Art & Design faculty will review portfolios and make recommendations for program acceptance.

Applicants may be required to take additional course work after careful review of undergraduate transcripts.

In addition to the application materials listed, transfer students must transfer graduate work completed elsewhere. Transcripts must accompany the written request. The acceptance of transfer credit is not automatic. The graduate faculty, the graduate advisor, and the School Director will determine how much, if any, previous graduate-level work may be transferred. The maximum allowable number of graduate transfer credits toward the degree is nine. All transfer credits must be in place by the end of the first semester.

Major Code: 3730

Degree Requirements

Code	Title	Hours
ART 502S	Game Design	3
ART 503	Game Theory	3
ART 505S	Game Production	3
ART 603S	Thesis: Concept & Research	3
ART 604S	Thesis: Design & Project Plan	3
ART 606S	Thesis: Project Launch	3
ART 607S	Thesis: Production	6
Select six hours from the following:		6
ART 608	Game Design Residency	
ART 507	Focus Module	

Electives

Total Hours

30

Suggested Plan of Study

First Semester	Hours
ART 608	1
	1
Second Semester	Hours
ART 502S	3
ART 503	3
ART 507	1
	7
Third Semester	Hours
ART 505S	3
ART 603S	3
ART 507	1
	7
Fourth Semester	Hours
ART 608	1
	1
Fifth Semester	Hours
ART 604S	3
ART 606S	3
ART 507	1
	7
Sixth Semester	Hours
ART 607S	6
	6
Seventh Semester	Hours
ART 608	1
	1

Total credit hours: 30

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The first semester in this program is a summer term.

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An accelerated track is also available. Candidates may consult their faculty advisor to learn more details.

Major Learning Outcomes

GAME DESIGN

1. Graduates of this program will be able to analyze the structure of a game to address theory, narrative, character, environment, and sound elements.
2. Graduates of this program will be able to produce functional game prototypes based on theoretical insight, factual observation, iterative processes, and a game design document.
3. Graduates of this program will be able to develop executive leadership, project management, and team management abilities to organize and manage a production pipeline in a remote team-based environment.
4. Graduates of this program will develop competence in usability testing for game quality control.