



Who we are

We are the Sector Skills council for the creative media industries, including Film, TV, Computer Games, Interactive Media and Animation

Our role is to supports skills and training for people and businesses to ensure the UK creative media industries maintain their world class position.

Skillset have advice and resources to both help career progression, and to inform new entrants.

We interface between education, training and industry



Flashback to 2005

There was a feeling amongst our advisors that the expansion of higher education, coupled with the increasing complexity and maturity of the computer games industry needs were leading to a disconnect.

- Students had little understanding of working to deadlines, or long term pressure.
- Unrealistic expectations of what roles they could do.
- HE Staff were disconnected from industry (and Industry were disconnected from Education!)
- Access to bespoke software in University seen as a problem
- Inability for students to do work placement within course. (Increases employability many times.)
- Depth of learning problematic
- Confusion over finding reliable sources of talent



What we are doing

- Industry Accreditation of Computer Games Courses.
- Creation of 23 Media Academies.
- Developed and piloted a Level 2 Apprenticeship in Games QA testing
- Look at developing a new Level 3 Games apprenticeship
- New emphasis on Management and Leadership skills
- Research (including into effects of the recession on the media industry)
- A Census to scope size of the industry
- CPD training. Train To Gain



How do we interface with Industry?

Tri annual meetings of our Skills councils:

Games council chaired by Ian Livingstone, Creative Director of Eidos, with representatives from Activision, Frontier, TIGA, ELSPA, Blitz, Traveller's Tales

Animation council chaired by Marion Edwards, VP of Programming at HIT Entertainment, with representatives from Tiger Aspect, Passion Pictures, Aardman Animation, Rushes

Formation of an industry accreditation panel

Empowered to steer forward assessing and awarding. Chaired by David Braben of Frontier with representatives invited from Disney, Gameware Development, Sony, Relentless, Rebellion, Sony, Team 17 and Zoonami.

We employ games industry people directly, to make it easier for them to extricate themselves!



Snapshot of employers

Approaching two thirds (63%) of Computer Games employers demonstrate their value of education by maintaining links with schools, colleges, universities and/or private training providers. Half of employers look only at 'particular universities' for recruitment.

Since 2000 – 87% of entrants to the games industry have been qualified to at least graduate level.

Games Programming courses viewed with suspicion, whereas established programming courses are used as recruiting grounds

NB Skillset to act on this



What are the skills gaps?

“The main areas of concern for the games industry remain focused on the recruitment and development of technical staff, and management and leadership”

“very specific skills shortcomings highlighted in the online space, with network skills and MMO development a noticeable issue”

“In particular, senior or advanced positions managing technical teams of artists and programmers is a noted skills gap”

Skillset “Computer Games Sector Profile”



What are employers issues with Education?

There were too many generalist courses, not supplying the right talent. Employers said there were too many computer science and art and design courses with games modules 'grafted on'.

Many employers feel the expansion in games courses has not helped graduate recruitment.

Employers most value a combination of technical and soft skills. Technical skills include C++ programming, online skills (servers and architecture), art and animation, whilst soft skills include team working, communication, project management and sales and marketing expertise.

More C++ please!

Employers believe that excellent courses should be kitemarked and supported so prospective students and employers can recognise them.



Why Accreditation?

Originally suggested in 2004 in response to graduate recruitment difficulties, perceived failing in HE system in UK, rising numbers of games courses, lack of contact between Industry and HE.

Initial support from ELSPA, TIGA, DTI, leading universities in games, leading companies on Skillset games skills council (EA, Sony, Eidos, Codemasters, Blitz, Activision etc)



How?

We created detailed guidelines for Art, Programming and Design pathways.

Assessment teams drawn from Industry and Education

Assessments are carried out in two stages focusing on

1. Learning Outcomes
2. Course Requirements
3. Resources
4. Staffing

www.skillset.org/games/accreditation/apply

Collaboration between Industry and HE facilitates joint projects (eg Abertay and middleware projects, Dare to Be Digital, GamesEdu)



Accreditation

"We believe that this is the first instance globally of the games industry co-operating on a national scale to support and enhance the development of its workforce. The Skillset accreditation system identifies industry-relevant courses which have demonstrated a commitment to teaching industry-relevant skills and enabling graduates to enter the workplace with the necessary confidence, skills and knowledge to succeed."

Ian Livingstone

Over 50 companies and individuals from the UK games industry have signed up to offer support to these courses in the form of visiting lectures, studio tours, workshops, masterclasses, mentoring and work placements.



Why should you engage with the Games industry?

- 28,000 work in the wider Games Industry compared with 5,000 in the Animation industry
- UK is fourth largest developer with around 211 studios, and around 30 publishers- behind US, Japan, Canada.
- TIGA: 80% of developer members are qualified to degree level. Ubisoft Reflections in Newcastle has staff with PhDs.
- Average income is high in comparison with other media – 34k
- Digital Britain report



Accredited Computer Games courses

Industry Accreditation of Computer Games Courses.

Courses accredited so far

University of Abertay (Dundee), [BA Hons Computer Games](#)

University of Hull, [MSc Games Programming](#)

Glamorgan Centre for Art and Design, [BA Hons Computer Animation](#)

University of West of Scotland, [BSc Hons Computer Games](#)

University of Abertay (Dundee), [BSc Hons Computer Games](#)

Four more applicants being processed...more news soon.

JOIN THEM!

In response to industry we will be looking at accrediting non-games courses that meet industry standards.



Interface issues:

- Difference in time frames between Education and Industry
- Long view vs. Short view
- The Skills factory vs. Education
- Educators being supported to approach industry
- Different Crunch times
- Is a three year degree enough time?
- 'Ask'



THANKS

www.skillset.org/games/accreditation

Saint John Walker, Computer Games
Animation and Facilities Manager,
Skillset
saintw@skillset.org

