



**Level 3 Computer Games Design**

**PARENT & CARERS' HANDBOOK  
2011/2012**

**Department of Media, Art & Design**

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## Welcome to Wakefield College

Dear Parent/Carer,

Welcome to Media, Art and Design at Wakefield College. This handbook has been designed to provide information for you about the College, our facilities and the programme of study your son/daughter/ward has embarked upon. I am delighted that s/he has chosen to study at the College and I would like to take this opportunity to provide you with some further information about the department including our recent successes and current developments.

Media, Art & Design has once again enjoyed strong enrolments following another successful year. Our Level 3 Computer Games Design course has increased enrolment by 100%, and now boasts four Year 1 groups. Our new Level 3 Media (TV & Film) course has proved extremely popular and Level 2 Media has enjoyed a bumper enrolment, with enough students for two groups. Level 3 Graphics, Level 3 Art and Level 3 Photography have seen an increase in demand, where other colleges have seen a fall.

A range of new resources have been installed, existing rooms have been adapted and improved, industry standard software has been updated to the latest version, and new equipment purchased across a range of courses. Several new members of teaching staff have been added to the team, each with exceptional industry standard skills and vast experience.

This year students will be able to enjoy a range of visits and residentials including a Games, Media, Graphics and Photography trip to Disneyland Paris, an Art trip to Paris, Art tours in London, Photography tours to Edinburgh, Birmingham, York, Whitby and London, Games exhibitions in London and Cologne, and trips to numerous universities, galleries and museums.

The end of year Art and Design Show drew in crowds to the exhibitions in both Thornes Park Campus and Merchant Gate and we have strengthened our relationship with The Art House and Trinity Walk. We have also further developed our Media Partnership with the Wakefield Wildcats and we are excited by the opportunities the partnership gives our Media students.

Our Web Design students continue to produce commercial briefs for a range of clients, and were featured on a major web design site. This is a really exciting time to be within Media, Art & Design as we look forward to our potential move to the city centre site next summer and further investment in our resources and facilities as we look to expand and further develop of our provision.

I am confident that our students will benefit from the many further developments that are planned. Your involvement in this process would be most welcome and I would strongly encourage you to communicate with me and/or my colleagues, for example, through Parent/Carer Consultation events, details of which are included on page 14 of this handbook.

Finally, our aim is to challenge our students to realise their full potential and to provide them with a high level of support to ensure that they are successful. We trust that your son/daughter/ward will thoroughly enjoy their time at College and that the experience will encourage them to continue with their education once they have completed their programme of study at Wakefield College.

Yours faithfully

Mike Jaques

Programme Manager for Media, Art & Design

## Course Information

### Level 3 Computer Games Design

This incorporates:

- BTEC Extended Diploma in Creative Media Production (Games Development)
- Extended Project Qualification

There are 19 units that every student must pass to complete the course. All the units are assessed through course work and could include:

- Pre-Production Techniques for the Creative Media Industries
- Communication Skills for Creative Media Production
- Research Techniques for the Creative Media Industries
- Creative Media Production Management Project
- Working to a Brief in the Creative Media Industries
- Critical Approaches to Creative Media Products
- Understanding the Computer Games Industry
- Computer Game Platforms and Technologies
- 3D Modelling, 3D Animation and 3D Environments
- Drawing Concept Art for Computer Games
- Computer Game Engines
- Computer Game Design
- Computer Game Story Development
- Digital Graphics for Computer Games
- Web Authoring
- 2D Animation Production
- Web animation for Interactive Media

All first year units must be completed to at least pass level to be able to continue into the 2<sup>nd</sup> year of the course.

## Progression Routes

Our students usually progress onto Computer Games Design or Development, Animation, Digital Graphics & Web Design courses at a range of Higher Education Institutions.

We have a Progression Agreement with the University of Huddersfield's Computing and Engineering department which guarantees our students 15 places across the University's range of games and multimedia courses (providing the entry requirements are met).

Alternatively, students could progress to the FdA Web Design course at our University Centre, Wakefield.

## **Tutorials**

Each student has a Personal Tutor who is central to the support and guidance your son/daughter/ward will receive during their time at College. Personal Tutors work with students to plan and review personal and academic progress. Regular one-to-one and group tutorials will help your son/daughter/ward and his/her Personal Tutor to get to know one another. This enhances the support that College offers to students relating to personal, academic and welfare issues ensuring that the time students spend at College is enjoyable and leads to success.

## **GCSEs & Functional Skills**

GCSEs and Functional Skills help to improve employability and study skills through the development of transferable skills and they are an integral part of College study.

The three Functional Skills are Maths, English and Information and Communication Technology (ICT), and the GCSEs available are English and Maths.

The specific course followed will depend on previous exam results and the level of main programme being studied. Please encourage your son/daughter/ward to discuss this with their Personal Tutor when building the programme of study. Wakefield College believes that all students should continue to develop their literacy, numeracy and ICT skills through their time with us.

If your son/daughter/ward is following an Apprenticeship programme, it is likely that they will study Key Skills instead of Functional Skills.

## **Equality & Diversity**

We are committed to ensuring that all our students have the opportunity to realise their potential regardless of disability, gender, sexuality, age, religion, race or ethnic background. Your son/daughter/ward will be introduced to the College's Equality & Diversity policy during induction week which will help them to reflect on the value of diversity and importance of equality. Our latest Ofsted inspection rated us as Outstanding for Equality & Diversity; a fact of which we are very proud.

## **Health & Safety and Safeguarding**

We expect to provide your son/daughter/ward with a safe and healthy learning environment. All students are provided with information about health and safety, for example, in the Student Handbook.

The College takes matters of health and safety extremely seriously and we expect students to behave in a way that assures their own safety and that of others in the College.

Wakefield College is committed to safeguarding young people and vulnerable adults and, last year Ofsted recognised our approach as Outstanding in their inspection. If you would like to read our Safeguarding Policy, you can find it here:

<http://www.wakefield.ac.uk/CorporateInformation/safeguarding.asp>.

## **Personal Property**

We strongly recommend that students do not bring valuables into College but, if this is unavoidable, please encourage your son/daughter/ward to take good care of them as Wakefield College is not responsible for any loss of, or damage to, these items.

## **Services and Support**

In addition to the support offered by Personal Tutors and course/programme teams, College offers the following services and support to your son/daughter/ward. Further information and contact details of these have been provided in the Student Handbook:

- Student Services
- Attendance and Achievement team
- Attendance Mentors
- Careers Education and Guidance
- Connexions
- Chaplaincy
- Counselling and Welfare Support
- Financial Support
- Reception Services
- Student Union
- Youth Workers

## **Attendance & Achievement and Attendance Mentoring teams**

A key role for all academic tutors, whether undertaking the role of Personal Tutors or not, is to support the retention and achievement of our learners. There are a range of support mechanisms and services in place to help tutors in this role, and provide appropriate support systems for students.

The College has three attendance and achievement assistants, each responsible for supporting attendance at a given campus. They are available between the hours of 8.30 am and 3.30 pm Monday to Friday during term time. Their role is primarily to work with tutors in following up any un-notified absences where requested and to follow up students identified as being at risk of withdrawal or non-completion. All programme areas are encouraged to use the attendance mentoring service, particularly where a student is at risk of being withdrawn or non-completion due to attendance issues.

Wakefield Campus  
Diane Foley-Hall Ext 3130 email [wakefieldattendance@wakefield.ac.uk](mailto:wakefieldattendance@wakefield.ac.uk)

Thornes Park Campus  
Kim Watson Ext 4757 email [thornesattendance@wakefield.ac.uk](mailto:thornesattendance@wakefield.ac.uk)

skillsXchange  
Ellen Close Ext 3458 email [skillsxchange@wakefield.ac.uk](mailto:skillsxchange@wakefield.ac.uk)

Attendance mentors are available at all 3 campuses between 10.00 am and 2.00 pm and offer an alternative point of contact for students, providing extra support when tutors may be unavailable. They will also work with students identified as being at risk to support achievement issues and help students access other service areas such as Counselling, Financial Support, and Connexions.

Wakefield Campus  
Jaime Philpott Ext 3130 email [wakefieldattendance@wakefield.ac.uk](mailto:wakefieldattendance@wakefield.ac.uk)

Thornes Park Campus  
Nic Guy Ext 4757 email [thornesattendance@wakefield.ac.uk](mailto:thornesattendance@wakefield.ac.uk)

skillsXchange  
Sam White Ext 3458 email [skillsxchange@wakefield.ac.uk](mailto:skillsxchange@wakefield.ac.uk)

### **Additional Support**

If your son/daughter/ward has a disability, medical condition, specific or general learning difficulty or other support needs, or these needs develop during the programme, please ask him/her to speak to his/her Personal Tutor, in confidence so that appropriate support can be put in place. If your son/daughter/ward has had special exam arrangements in the past, Personal Tutors should be advised of this in order that special arrangements can be requested at College. The Additional Support Service provides support to students with additional needs so you may wish to contact them directly for advice. The telephone numbers are 01924 789262 and 789585.

## Financial Support for Students

### *Students aged 16-18*

If you/or your household have a gross income of under £20,000 you may be eligible for some support this maybe in the form of the following: EMA, 16-18 Bursary, Bus Pass or Care to Learn (helps towards childcare costs)

### *Students aged 19+*

If you/or your household have a gross income of under £20,000 you may be eligible for some support this maybe in the form of the following: help towards kits, residential, travel expenses (if you live more than 2 miles from college), meals and childcare (students aged 20+)

Please contact the Financial Support team on 01924 789304/789549 or e-mail: [studentfinance@wakefield.ac.uk](mailto:studentfinance@wakefield.ac.uk) . If your son/daughter/ward is in receipt of EMA payments, absence from College must be reported on 01924 789789.

## Student Code of Conduct and Disciplinary Procedures

All students who enrol at the College are agreeing to accept the regulations concerning behaviour in the Student Code of Conduct. All students are made aware of the detail of the Code of Conduct during induction week at the beginning of term and the full Code of Contact is available on request. At all times, students are expected to:

- Behave in a thoughtful, caring and courteous manner to other College users.
- Behave in a mature and responsible manner, whether on College premises or on educational visits, industrial or commercial placements.
- Work to the best of their ability in pursuit of their Learning Goal.
- Complete programme requirements and meet assignment deadlines.
- Show respect for College property, facilities and resources.
- Notify their tutor immediately whenever attendance at arranged sessions and meetings is delayed or not possible.
- Comply with the required administration procedures.
- Adhere to the No Smoking Policy.
- Show commitment to the aims of the College's policy for equality and diversity.
- Have regard for the health and safety of all.
- Adhere to this Code of Conduct and all other policies and regulations, which may be notified to students.

The College's disciplinary procedures are in place to ensure that any disciplinary matters are dealt with in a consistent and fair manner. The procedure covers all unacceptable behaviour, ranging from minor lapses from acceptable standards of behaviour to serious breaches of the College's regulations.

A brief outline of the current procedure is given below:

<b>Disciplinary Issue</b>	<b>Example(s)</b>
Minor lapse from acceptable standards of behaviour	- Late arrival to class - Homework handed in late
Minor infringement of Code of Conduct	- Unexplained absences - Disruption of learning
Persistent minor infringements	Repeated/numerous minor infringements
Act of serious misconduct	- Bullying - Compromising health and/or safety of others - Criminal activity e.g. racist or sexist behaviour - Possession of controlled substances
Breach of Disciplinary Contract	

<b>Stage</b>	<b>Misconduct</b>	<b>Academic progress</b>	<b>Issued by</b>
Informal	Verbal reprimand/warning		Any staff – teaching, support, security
	Incident form		
Formal Stage 1	Misconduct form	Academic progress form	Personal tutor, course tutor
Formal Stage 2	Formal Review Contract		Programme manager
Formal Stage 3	Breach of contract Contract review Contract continues/recommendation for exclusion		Director
	Serious misconduct Suspension Formal Hearing Contract/exclusion		Director Panel Principal

## Attendance and Punctuality Expectations for Students

1. The College takes attendance & punctuality very seriously. Only learners who attend regularly pass their course. You are expected to attend all lessons on your timetable (including Tutorials, Key Skills & any other sessions which form part of your programme.)
2. If you are ill, you or your parent/carer (if you are under 19) must contact the College on that day to explain your absence. You should telephone College on 01924 789789
3. If you are absent without notifying the College, your tutor or an attendance mentor may contact you or your parents/carers if you are under 19, to ask for an explanation of your absence.
4. Appointments for doctor, dentist etc. should occur out of lesson time.
5. If you know you are going to be absent, you should let each of your tutors know in advance. If appropriate, your tutor will ask you for some evidence about the absence, such as an appointment letter.
6. When you return to College after a period of absence, you must explain the reasons for your absence to your Personal Tutor & your subject teachers & arrange to catch up with notes & home/coursework you have missed.
7. There is no signing out procedure in the College. If you leave the College early you will be marked as absent for any lessons you miss. You should let your teachers/tutors know why you will be absent before you leave College.
8. Long term absence will require evidence to support your absence. This evidence must be brought to your tutor on your return to College. Acceptable evidence includes a doctor's certificate or a letter from a hospital indicating that you are having regular treatment. If there are special circumstances e.g. bereavement in your family, or any other exceptional situations, you should discuss these with your tutor.
9. If you miss lessons without good reason, your tutor will begin taking disciplinary action & if your attendance falls below 80% you risk being withdrawn from your course.
10. You are expected to arrive on time to all your lessons.
11. If you arrive late to a lesson you should give your tutor an explanation.
12. If you are persistently late to lessons without good reason, your tutor will begin taking disciplinary action.
13. If you are more than 15 minutes late to a lesson without good reason, your tutor may refuse entry to the lesson and you will be marked absent. Your attendance and punctuality will be reported:
  - to your parents/carer if you are under 19;
  - on your UCAS reference if you apply for HE;
  - and on any reference for an employer, which the College is requested to provide.
14. You are strongly discouraged from taking holidays in term time. If, however, this is unavoidable, you must follow College's procedures for applying for holiday in term time. If permission is given for the absence, disciplinary action will not be taken. If permission is not given for the absence disciplinary action may be taken.
15. Attendance Mentors are available at all three sites & will aim to contact students if absence has not been notified in advance. The role of the Attendance Mentors is to offer active encouragement & support for regular attendance & to put support mechanisms in place when students are experiencing attendance difficulties which could otherwise affect on-course success.

## **Holiday During Term Time**

- The learner should raise this in the first instance with the Personal Tutor. The learner will be advised against taking time off during term time.
- If student insists on taking a holiday, a letter (from parent/carer if the learner is under 19) needs to be brought in by the student to the relevant Programme Manager.
- If the Programme Manager gives permission, a permission letter will be sent home. An email is to be circulated to teaching tutors and Personal Tutor by the Programme Manager.
- Before a holiday is authorised, the Programme Manager should consider:
  - the length of the holiday
  - the reason for the holiday
  - the learner's attendance/progress on the course
- If a Programme Manager is unsure about granting permission then advice should be sought from the Academy Director.
- If the Programme Manager does not give permission, and the learner is absent due to the holiday, a misconduct form is to be issued and the disciplinary procedure followed.
- If permission is granted, the learner is required to go to all teaching tutors to arrange work set for the period of absence.
- On returning from holiday, it is the responsibility of the student to arrange an ILP meeting with their Personal Tutor in order to check that they are up to date with academic studies.

## **Homework/Assignments and Private Study**

As the Level 3 Computer Games Design course uses specialist software, students are given time in class to work on every assignment. They are occasionally given tasks to complete before the next lesson, however generally the amount of homework that a student needs to do is dependent on how much work they complete in class (i.e. a student who works hard and completes the required work in class won't need to do any homework). However, we do strongly encourage students to further their knowledge outside of class time in areas related to the course. Students are advised on Games Industry magazines, books, websites and podcasts which anyone seriously wanting to work in the Games Industry would be regularly reading/listening to.

Some students wish to further their knowledge of the specialist software. We recognise that this software can be very expensive so we tell all of our Games students that they are welcome to come into college on days off and use our facilities.

Students will be given feedback for every assignment they complete. The feedback received from tutors is an important part of the learning process and therefore it is essential that work is completed on time and all deadlines are met. If a student does not achieve they grade they hoped for, they are allowed to attempt the unit and improve the grade.

## **Standards of Work**

To ensure the development and success of our students, we ask them to:

- make every effort to achieve and maintain a high standard of work that is compatible with their target grades, and to meet all course requirements including student achievement milestones;
- complete all homework, coursework, projects and assignments on time; and to
- make systematic use of study time to follow up and consolidate work covered in class.

## **Examination Entries**

Provided that a student has satisfied the minimum attendance and standards of work requirements, s/he will normally be entered for the first take of each examination for free, i.e. the College will pay the examination entry fees. If, however, a student subsequently withdraws from one of more elements of his/her programme without good medical reason, then the student will be billed for the examination fee(s). This applies to ALL elements of a student's programme of study.

## **Programme/Subject Changes**

Students' programmes of study are based upon individual qualification profiles at the start of the programme. Once the programme has been agreed then we expect students to complete it in full. We will only consider changes to the programme in exceptional circumstances, and any such changes require the approval of the Programme Manager.

If, however, your son/daughter/ward feels that s/he has chosen the wrong subject/course, we will consider a request for a transfer to another subject/course, provided that the request is submitted to their Personal Tutor before 14<sup>th</sup> October 2011. On a one-year programme, we firmly believe that it is unrealistic to change subjects/course after this stage and consequently, any changes after this period will only be allowed if there are compelling reasons to do so.

Please note that students are instructed to attend all parts of their original programme until any proposed changes have been agreed.

## How You Can Help

In study after study, researchers discover how important it is for parents to be actively involved in their children's education, and this need does not diminish once students get beyond the age of 16.

Helping your son/daughter/ward to achieve their potential at College can be as simple as asking 'How was College today?', but ask every day – this will send the clear message that College work is important to you and you expect him/her to put in maximum effort. Other ways you can help include:

- Aim to provide a quiet, well-lit space at home for private study. If this is not possible, encourage your son/daughter/ward to use the College's Learning Resource Centres.
- Be aware of the College's calendar. If at all possible, do not book family holidays during term time.
- If you book medical or dental appointments or arrange driving lessons on behalf of your son/daughter/ward, please book these out of College hours.
- Familiarise yourself with coursework deadlines and recognise that there may be an increased level of pressure on students at these times.
- Take an active interest in his/her studies; point out relevant newspaper articles and TV programmes.
- Attend all Parent/Carer Consultation opportunities. Again, this sends a positive message of support to your son/daughter/ward.
- Encourage excellent attendance and encourage your son/daughter/ward to let College know if s/he is going to be absent.
- Contact College if you have any concerns about progress, welfare or any other issues with which we may be able to help. It may be useful to make a note of your son/daughter/ward's Personal Tutor contact details below:

**Name of Personal Tutor:** Rachel Murie

**College Email Address:** r.murie@wakefield.ac.uk

**College Telephone Number:** 01924 789848

## **College Calendar for 2011 - 2012**

### **Term One**

CLASSES 5th September 2011 – 21st October 2011

HALF-TERM 24th October 2011 – 28th October 2011

CLASSES 31st October 2011 – 15th December 2011

CHRISTMAS BREAK 19th December 2011 – 2nd January 2012

### **Term Two**

CLASSES 3rd January 2012 – 10th February 2012

HALF TERM 13th February 2012 – 17th February 2012

CLASSES 20th February 2012 – 30th March 2012

EASTER BREAK 2nd April 2012 – 13th April 2012

### **Term Three**

CLASSES 16th April 2012 – 1st June 2012

HALF TERM 4th June 2012- 8th June 2012

CLASSES 11th June 2012 – 29th June 2012

You will be informed of any amendments to the above calendar, for example the arrangements for study leave for students on Advanced level programmes or due to Taster day(s).

### **Parent/Carer Consultation Events**

For students under 19, parents/carers will be invited to attend a consultation evening later in the year. This will give you the opportunity to discuss your son/daughter/ward's progress on the course, as well as talk about their progression options.