



TIGA

LEAP

2014

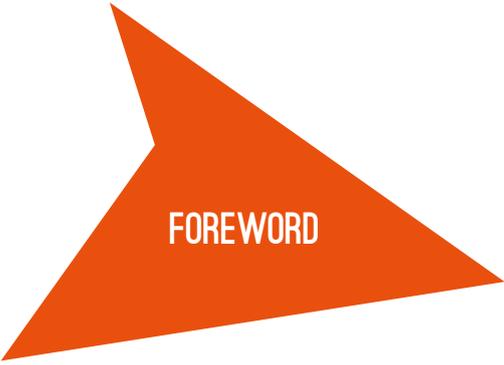
In association with

UNIVERSITY OF
Southampton

**ENSURING MORE OF YOUR
VIDEOGAMES STUDENTS MAKE
THE JUMP TO EMPLOYMENT
STRAIGHT OUT OF HIGHER
EDUCATION**

TIGA™

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FOREWORD

TIGA's goal is to strengthen the UK videogames industry and help create a business environment that is conducive to success on the global stage. Our education members are absolutely integral to our efforts on this front.

If our industry is to capitalise on its recent resurgence it is essential that business and education come together to share their requirements, insights and aspirations.

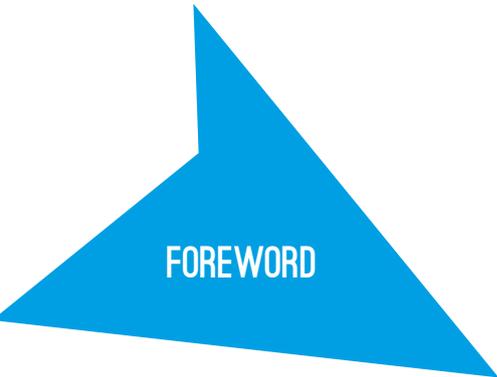
Moreover, there are few more pressing challenges than how we can increase

the number of videogames industry graduates that are finding jobs in the sector upon graduation.

I would like to thank Winchester School of Art for supporting Leap 2014, and hope you find this report of the best practice and insight discussed at the event, helpful in forging a closer connection with your colleagues in games development and academia.

DR RICHARD WILSON
CEO, TIGA

IF OUR INDUSTRY IS TO CAPITALISE ON ITS RECENT RESURGENCE IT IS ESSENTIAL THAT BUSINESS AND EDUCATION COME TOGETHER TO SHARE THEIR REQUIREMENTS, INSIGHTS AND ASPIRATIONS.



FOREWORD

A continual challenge facing educators today is how to make our courses as relevant as possible, which is especially challenging in an industry as fast-paced and high-tech as videogames.

Part of the reason we joined TIGA is because of this challenge, and because we too now offer a videogames degree - Game Design & Art. As such, we are also focused on becoming a hub of brilliant games design in our own

right and building stronger links with industry, and events like Leap provide an excellent opportunity for us to discuss and learn how to do so.

I would like to thank everyone that attended, and look forward to working with you all more in 2015 and beyond.

ASHOK RANCHHOD
READER IN MARKETING
COMMUNICATIONS AT WINCHESTER
SCHOOL OF ART, UNIVERSITY OF
SOUTHAMPTON



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1.

The purpose of Leap 2014

Leap 2014 was a new TIGA event designed to provide university and college games development course leaders with the opportunity to meet heads of recruitment at the UK's top videogames development studios.

University and college representatives and game development studio representatives came together on October 16th 2014, under the auspices of TIGA to address what HR and studio heads need from a graduate to be able to say "you're hired".

Leap 2014 also provided the opportunity for course leaders to be heard by games industry leaders regarding how they can help create more effective, attractive and cutting edge games development courses.

Our ambition is for Leap to become an important annual meeting of the leading lights in the UK games development, recruitment and education sectors, to continually address what the future holds for the art and science of education in the UK videogames industry, and how we can forge ever closer ties and promote best practice.

LEAP 2014 ALSO PROVIDED THE
OPPORTUNITY FOR COURSE LEADERS TO
BE HEARD BY GAMES INDUSTRY LEADERS

A Strategic Overview

Supporting the higher education sector is a key goal of TIGA and of great importance to the UK economy.

The UK is second only to the USA in the market for overseas students. The net annual contribution to the UK's national income made by international students in higher education is estimated by the Government to be £10 billion. This is estimated to rise to £17 billion by 2025¹

As such, it is vital that the UK Government does all it can to support and invest in this hugely valuable sector. At present, many of the UK's competitors spend substantially more on higher education². Canada, South Korea and the USA spend between 2.6

per cent and 2.8 per cent of GDP on tertiary institutions. The UK spends just 1.4 per cent of Gross Domestic Product (GDP) on tertiary education, of which approximately three quarters is from private sources³. Unless the UK increases investment on tertiary education and spends it effectively, the UK's competitive advantage in higher education will be eroded.

The UK simply cannot build a knowledge economy on the cheap and expect to remain competitive in global markets. TIGA is committed to supporting the higher education sector and pushing to ensure we keep up with the competition.

2.

THE NET ANNUAL CONTRIBUTION TO THE UK'S NATIONAL INCOME MADE BY INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS IN HIGHER EDUCATION IS ESTIMATED BY THE GOVERNMENT TO BE 10 BILLION. THIS IS ESTIMATED TO RISE TO 17 BILLION BY 2025¹

¹ Universities UK Parliamentary Briefing (Universities UK, available at <http://www.universitiesuk.ac.uk/highereducation/Documents/2013/BriefingImmigrationBillSecondReading.pdf>)

² The UK spent 1.4 per cent of its GDP on tertiary education in 2010 (Education at a Glance, OECD, 2013), of which 0.7 per cent came from public sources (including public subsidies to households attributable to educational institutions and direct expenditure from international sources) and 0.6 percent from private sources of funding. Core tertiary education services accounted for 0.8 per cent of the GDP, ancillary services 0.11 per cent, and R&D at tertiary institutions 0.46 per cent. Excluding public subsidies attributable to payments to educational institutions, public funding for tertiary education accounted only for 25.2 per cent of all funding for tertiary education.

³ Including subsidies. Education at a Glance 2013 (OECD, 2013).



What games development studios and recruiters would like from students

From the discussion it was clear that whilst videogames developers are always looking for intelligent graduates with proven academic results, these factors, whilst important, will not necessarily create a standout student.

What does make for a must-hire is the following:

3.

STUDENTS THAT HAVE MADE AND LAUNCHED A GAME

There is nothing that shows a graduate can hit the ground running more than having completed and made available games project. This does not mean a product that has professional quality, but it does mean something that is 'complete', works and has been published for download or sale, somewhere, somehow.

That does not have to mean the App Store or Google Play either, the key point is developers love to find candidates that have the experience and character that seeing the full development and publishing process through provides.

In the past few years many universities have incorporated making, finishing and launching games part of videogames courses, and great programmes like BUGS are a major factor in helping drive this. You can find more information on BUGS in section 5.

EXAMPLE:

MIKE HAWKYARD
Managing Director, Amuzo

Amuzo is a BAFTA nominated and award winning casual games developer based in Bournemouth that has made over 60 games and had seven Number One App's on the Apple App Store.

Two sites where Amuzo searched for and hired UK graduates from are Kongregate and Newgrounds. This started with the rise of flash games, which are helpful for keeping consumers on websites for longer and increasing advertising revenue, and continued with the arrival of smartphones and mobile apps.

Kongregate for example has a Unity games section so employers can see a complete, submitted and rated game made with a leading games engine, and review its gameplay, graphics and design.

This demonstrates that there are many ways students can complete and launch a game that do not require getting picked up by Apple or published via Xbox Live!



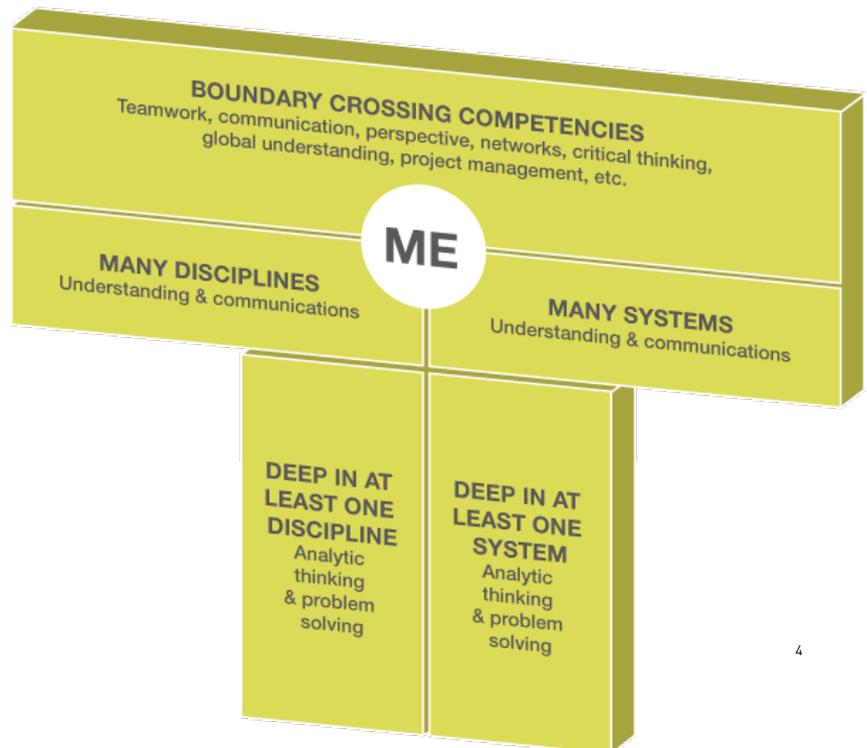
"THE T-SHAPE" - IT HELPS TO BE A WELL-ROUNDED SPECIALIST

The concept of a "T-shape" professional has been around for a while now, here's what it means:

In short, many modern businesses, including games development studios are looking for well-rounded specialists, with a broad understanding and experience of e.g. teamwork and communication, as well as some critical thinking and project management skills, and a deep understanding of one specialism, which can be a combination of both a discipline (such as art) and one system (such as 3ds Max).

This is obviously a modern definition of the ideal employee, and studios do appreciate universities are producing graduates, not hardened professionals. Nonetheless, this provides an excellent template to work towards.

The key takeaway for universities and students is that developers want someone who can at least say what their specialism is and show evidence of deep understanding and expertise. Thus "I want to be a games engine developer" or "I want to be a concept artist" is more attractive than "I want to work in the videogames industry."



4



3.2

EVIDENCE OF COMMITMENT AND NETWORKING BEYOND THEIR DEGREE

The UK videogames industry is so competitive that a good degree alone is unlikely to be enough to stand out. Developers are looking for evidence that graduates are committed to a career in the industry beyond the course they studied.

It has long been recognised that extra-curricular activities are an effective way to build a breadth of pre-employment experience and achievement.

In the games industry this would include games and other creative projects students made in their free time. There are also a number of free industry events students can attend and network at. As an example TIGA student membership costs just £60 per annum and entitles students to attend every event for free.

Graduates should be prepared to talk about and show evidence of additional creative projects, events they've been to, and people they already know or have met in the industry.

A good starting point would be for them to be regular readers of key industry media outlets like Games Industry International, PocketGamer, Develop and Gamasutra, and to keep an eye on the events pages in particular, which we have linked to here.

Games Industry International
www.gamesindustry.biz/network/events

PocketGamer
www.pocketgamer.biz/events

Develop
www.develop-online.net/events

Gamasutra
www.gamasutra.com/calendar/calendar.php

GRADUATES SHOULD BE PREPARED TO TALK ABOUT AND SHOW EVIDENCE OF ADDITIONAL CREATIVE PROJECTS, EVENTS THEY'VE BEEN TO, AND PEOPLE THEY ALREADY KNOW OR HAVE MET IN THE INDUSTRY.



3.3

SKILLED AND EXPERIENCED AT WORKING IN VARIED PHYSICAL AND VIRTUAL TEAMS

Whilst games development graduates are not expected to have the communications skills of say, marketing and PR graduates, time and again the ability to work well in a team and complete projects to a deadline came up as hugely valuable to employers.

It is also true that whilst the single coder / indie developer still has a valuable and viable role in the games industry, the overarching trend has been for commercially successful games to become bigger and more complex, which simply cannot be made single-handedly.

Another trend is remote working and collaborating with other creators and disciplines in virtual teams, so having experienced this during their degree or creative side projects would also be helpful for students.

EXAMPLE:
RYAN LOCKE
Lecturer in Media Design,
Abertay University

Abertay University has previously hosted GameJam events in collaboration with TIGA and other businesses and organisations, and found them to an effective way of helping students learn and experience teamwork and collaboration under pressure.

As well as helping students create new IP, GameJams also encourage creativity under pressure, replicate the business conditions today's development studios must deal with and can be a powerful peer learning and networking exercise.

Abertay has also provided students with their own GameLab, which consists of two main teaching areas, an octagonal pod area housing 40 computer stations, and an advanced development areas housing 50 computer stations used for the high-end games and graphics development.

In addition to the common room, these areas have been given over to the students to act as natural hubs for collaboration and teamwork, and with the active involvement of Abertay's student games dev society, have become fundamental to the university environment as a place of practice. It has also empowered the students to create their own collaborative culture and proactively reach out to and engage the industry.

All of which has increased the productive output and teamwork capabilities and experience of Abertay students.



4.

What games development studios and recruiters would like from universities

It was noted that universities have made great progress in better preparing students for the realities of life in the UK videogames business. It is also the case that studios may have an ideal wish list that is not perfectly deliverable.

Nonetheless the discussion produced some notable suggestions that it would be well worth course leaders considering how they could move towards.

REMOVE THE SILOS BETWEEN COURSES: CREATIVE INDUSTRIES REQUIRE CROSSOVER

Modern games development is a multidisciplinary endeavour involving programmers, musicians, artists and more general creatives. It was suggested that bringing students from different courses together more often, for example mixing games development and history students, would be a valuable experience.

This would also reflect the range of creative backgrounds that some of the leading figures in the industry have, and broaden students' creative thinking. All of which should feed through into students having better ideas and as a result making better games to show to potential employers.

A MORE HOLISTIC APPROACH THAT INCLUDES SOME BUSINESS TRAINING AND EDUCATION

A development of the previous point, it was also suggested that providing games development students with modules in business, marketing, public relations and basic accounting for example would be extremely

beneficial. This could be achieved again by having students from different degrees collaborate on projects or by incorporating more of this material into the syllabus.

MORE OF A COMMERCIAL AND PRACTICAL SENSE INSTILLED FROM DAY ONE

Given the demographics of the UK games development industry, which is now dominated by micro-studios of four staff members or less, graduates are more likely to be in a small business and thus more exposed to the commercial realities of cash flow as much as coding.

As such it was suggested students would benefit from increased awareness that whilst videogames is a fantastic creative industry, it is also ultimately about making money. If students can join small businesses with this kind of commercial and practical sense from the start, both they and their employers would be in a stronger position.



5.

What universities would like from games development studios

There are many ways studios can get involved with their local university.

It is hugely beneficial for students to hear from practitioners in the industry. If games developers could at least consider if they have any time to set aside to proactively engage students and work with universities to educate and encourage the next generation, it would be a considerable step in the right direction.

GUEST LECTURING

One option could be TIGA's guest lecturer programme. Taking part improves employers' connections with their local graduate talent pool, and teaching and lecturing is one of the best ways of sharpening and formalising your own knowledge and training capabilities, from which your own staff and business will benefit.

If you are interested in being a guest lecturer, please get in touch with Suzi Stephenson at TIGA (suzi@tiga.org), and provide, with as much specific detail as possible:

- your contact details (name, phone number, email);
- the name, location and type of your business; and
- your specialist areas in which you could potentially lecture

We will store this information in the 'Members' Only' section on the TIGA website and so enable TIGA university members to contact industry professionals and invite them to act as guest lecturers.

As a guide, currently our guest lecturer matching service uses the following categories of expertise, including:

- Art
- Animation
- Audio Production
- Game Design
- Mobile/Social/Online
- Production
- Programming
- QA
- Careers
- Mobile/social/online
- General industry info

If your expertise is from outside these areas, we are always open to suggestions, so if you have something to offer as a guest lecturer, please do not hesitate to get in touch.

**5.1**

ACCREDITATION, ACCREDITATION, ACCREDITATION

Getting courses accredited - reviewed and validated by the relevant approval body, is one of the biggest challenges facing course leaders. It is also critically important, as the course content and format is checked to see if it is up to industry standards.

As such, it is an area where games industry professionals can add huge value for their academic colleagues, and take an active and effective role in helping maintain and improve standards of education.

If developers can spare the time to review and feedback on university course material it helps keep courses up to date, and is a great way to sharpen their own skills. If you are interested in helping your local university with their accreditation process, please contact Suzi Stephenson via suzi@tiga.org

TIGA has introduced an accreditation system for universities and colleges. For more information about this programme please see section 8.1 below.

PLACEMENTS AND INTERNSHIPS

Whilst work placements and internships are not a new idea, they merit inclusion simply as a reminder of one of the single best ways students can be prepared for the workplace, and increase their chances of getting hired.

What is critical is that it is a mutually

beneficial arrangement that provides cost effective resource for studios and a meaningful learning experience for the student. The key to this is both taking time to match the student's course and experience to the placement or internship available, and also investing a little time in planning a work schedule.



6.

How to get the HR basics right

We were fortunate to have heads of HR and recruitment from major UK studios present at the TIGA Leap event, including Rebellion, Sumo Digital, Space Ape and Jagex. The following were unanimously agreed upon as being essential for all applicants that want to do well.

IT ALL STARTS WITH THE PORTFOLIO, AND A PROFESSIONAL ONLINE PRESENCE

It may seem obvious, but it was clear from discussions that the impact of having a detailed, well presented portfolio of work should not be underestimated.

A professional portfolio should have the best work and key information up front. Academic performance, most notable achievements and work done above and beyond their degree

needs to be immediately visible and digestible in ten seconds or less.

Contemporary portfolios should also be accompanied by an online profile where videos can be watched, and ideally, games played. Skilled games development students that are looking for work are today expected to have their own site which showcases their personality and their work.

SHOW PASSION, FOCUS AND THE ABILITY TO THINK ON YOUR FEET

As was previously alluded to in the ideal “T-shaped” professional, games developers and digital publishers are not primarily looking for “jack of all trades”. The videogames industry can often mean long hours and hard work, which means employers are looking for candidates with passion, not only about being in the industry, but for doing and growing into a specific role in the industry.

The more knowledge a graduate can show about the discipline they are targeting, the more comfortable an

employer will be with bringing them on board. Having a passion for game engine coding or concept art, being able to discuss why they like these areas and what the future holds - these are questions students must be capable of answering.

Lastly, it should also be noted that employers are looking for someone who can demonstrate analytical and problem solving capabilities. As such graduates should be prepared to answer follow up ‘why’ questions and explain their rationale.



6.1

DO YOUR HOMEWORK

Again, it may seem obvious to research the company you are being interviewed by, yet attendees at Leap 2014 made it clear it often does not happen.

Graduates should know the history of a developer or publisher, their

notable games, and ideally, be able to draw a connection between their own specialist skills and experience and the particular focus of the business they are interviewing with.

A LITTLE COMMUNICATIONS COACHING CAN GO A LONG WAY

Some basic interview training can make a major difference to a student's chances.

Core behaviours like displaying open body language, a confident level of eye contact, and preparing concise answers to interview questions that have clear conclusions and supporting evidence would all be time well spent in the education of today's games development students.

Ultimately it is no longer enough to provide students with a degree, if your course is reliant on statistics regarding job placement, then following through with coaching on the job application process will be of considerable benefit to universities and students alike.

It is worth noting that recruitment agencies, especially those that specialise in the videogames sector, like Interactive Selection, Amiquis, MPG Universal and Aardvark Swift can also add a great deal of value in helping students improve their application and interview performance.

Of particular interest might be **www.gamecareers.biz** - an excellent site managed by David Smith of Interactive Selection, which features a large range of career guiding interviews with leading videogames industry professionals.

This is in addition to Aardvark Swift's 'Get In The Game' nationwide UK university tour: **www.gradsingames.com/get-game** - which offers students specialist advice from recruitment experts and developers, highlighting the benefits and reality of a career in games development and giving students the guidance they need on how to prepare and improve their employability.

Interactive Selection
www.interactiveselection.com

Amiquis
www.amiquis.com

MPG Universal
www.mpg-universal.com

Aardvark Swift
www.aswift.com



How universities are innovating now

With a number of top universities present, there was an excellent exchange of ideas and suggestions of both new programmes and activities, and current schemes that universities can and should take advantage of.

Below are some of the highlights of this discussion with case study information and contact details where relevant.

7.

BUGS

BUGS is a live network of more than 15 universities (and rising fast) connecting UK videogames businesses directly with the best UK videogames students, making it easier for you to find local talent at the standard you need. Think LinkedIn for the best games development students in the UK, with the crucial difference that, on the BUGS website, every graduate also has a portfolio of complete games, allowing you to see what they've actually made, and what their specific role on the development team was.

For students and their games to be featured on the BUGS platform, a team, headed by Jon Hare, co-founder of Sensible Software and a leading UK

games industry figure, must approve and sign off each game as being of a professional standard with regard to robustness and completeness.

This means BUGS students learn what it is like to make games in teams of programmers, artists and designers to the exacting standards of real-world business whilst they are studying. This is sometimes overlooked and means that a BUGS graduate is more likely to be ready to hit the ground running and instantly contribute to your business.

For more info and to sign up as either a university looking to place students or a studio looking to hire them, please visit **www.bugsnet.org**

A PROACTIVE APPROACH TO DIVERSITY PAYS DIVIDENDS

One of the most important points raised at Leap 2014 was that taking a proactive approach to encouraging diversity is good business sense for educators (and also employers).

It is well documented that the UK videogames sector is suffering from a skills shortage, and that the percentage of videogames graduates successfully getting jobs in the industry should be higher - with some estimates putting the figure as low as 12 percent. Therefore, anything that can be done to broaden the pool of talent the industry has to call on is welcome, which is exactly what taking a proactive approach to diversity achieves.

Simply put, it is about getting people to consider doing a videogames related course or getting a job in the sector that otherwise might not have, for whatever reason. Essentially this issue is about best practice in university and employer marketing, ensuring your course appeals as much as possible to people of all backgrounds and needs.

Best practice university and employer marketing with respect to diversity does not have to be expensive or onerous either. Rather, what makes a difference is just putting some conscious thought into how you can present a course and environment that looks welcoming to as wide a range of people as possible.

EXAMPLE:

MARIE-CLAIRE ISAAMAN
Course Leader, BA(Hons) Games Art and Design, Norwich University of The Arts

When Marie-Claire took over the course there were only two female students and no female staff. Now, in the 2014/15 intake, 33% of the course's 80 new students are female, as are 50% of course staff.

Not only are NUA's female alumni achieving at the highest possible level, the change in demographic has had a huge impact on the course's employment statistics - an incredible 81% of Games Art and Design students are employed or engaged in further study 6 months after completion of their degree, with 71% of this group working in the games industry or in games further study. It is also worth noting that NUA won the 2014 Times Higher Education Award for excellence and innovation in the arts.

It is also clear that not only did a proactive approach to diversity attract more people to the course, a more equal gender balance, for example, increases the creative quality of the learning environment:

"My preconceptions were challenged from open day onwards; every other university I'd visited had dozens of men huddled behind computers but NUA had girls, and consequently felt completely different. That's one of the main reasons I took the place. Once on the course I believe the gender balanced environment enabled me to engage with different perspectives and consequently come up with more interesting and creative work than if I'd just been with other males"

JOSH ALLEN
GAD Graduate 2013 and UI Artist at Sprung Studios, Brighton

"During my time at university Marie-Claire was a huge inspiration and influence on my confidence and work. Seeing her own determination and confidence within the games industry not only as an academic but as a female reassured me with moving forward in the industry, which was aided by her support and advice. I could not have asked for a stronger role model or Course Leader during these crucial years, providing both a host of knowledge and a level of support that went above and beyond that of a typical Course Leader."

JESS MAGNUS
GAD Graduate 2014 and 3D Artist at Preloaded, London

Marie-Claire's approach involved the following:

- increasing the number of female tutors and course staff where appropriate;
- proactively catering for students with e.g. Autism and showcasing their work and potential;
- ensuring the Open Day showed the course would not be an all-male environment;
- having more balanced imagery on the course website;
- this means more equal mix of men, women and ethnicities and also imagery that reflects the creative range of the artform, beyond e.g. first person shooters and military themes;
- having more female spokespeople representing the course and the university that have strong communication skills and can think like a marketer;
- speaking personally in the media and at industry and education events, from Women In Games Conferences to UCAS fairs;
- showcasing both female and male student's work; and
- simply putting some time into thinking about and writing a strategy for increasing the diversity of the course

It is clear that as a university or employer you will attract what you promote, if you present an all-white, all-male image for example, the odds are higher that this demographic will make up a higher percentage of applicants. If you present a more balanced and varied image, with a range of genders and ethnicities, then the odds are higher that this will be reflected in the range (and the number) of applicants too.

It is also important to note that this is not about hiring someone to put on your website, rather it is about showcasing the diversity you do have, and further encouraging it where possible and appropriate.

7.2

Another great idea that came up in discussion was that of students taking a year out and actually creating and running a start up whilst being coached.

When it comes to running a business, nothing beats experience, and this approach means students can gain that experience in a safe environment. Even if they 'fail' as most start-ups do, this is also a hugely beneficial learning experience that can have a transformative effect on a student's post-start-up year academic performance.

It is of course vitally important that remote learning, guidance and business coaching is provided throughout the year, as this minimises the stressful elements of managing a start-up, and maximises how much students' gain from the experience.

EXAMPLE:

UNIVERSITY OF PORTSMOUTH'S SELF-EMPLOYED PLACEMENT YEAR (SPY) PROGRAMME

for BSc (Hons) Computer Games Technology and BSc(Hons) Computer Games Enterprise

Whilst the programme began rather informally, it has since become a formalised process adopted by the University more broadly. In 2015 SPY will have 20 students making up four studios, and 16 students making up three studios next year.

The process begins with students being given a framework for a business proposal, then writing their own, and

STUDENT START-UPS - NOTHING BEATS EXPERIENCE

presenting it to their lecturers and peers, Dragons Den style. This often helps students adjust their plans so they are more realistic and achievable.

It also means they set out the projects creative direction and production schedule, decide what additional expertise they need, and make core decisions such as what platform and engines / tools they will use.

There is also an ongoing focus on the business side; how will they market and organize the game? How will they organize their team, find an office space or work virtually? Will they work part time or take out a student loan? It's important that the startup year isn't sugarcoated - it's a tough experience, especially for young people not used to such a steep learning curve, multiple responsibilities and the freedom to set their own schedule.

Portsmouth students are provided with an academic mentor (one of the games lecturers) who advises on the game itself, and a business mentor, to keep them focused on launching and running a business, rather than just expanding their asset portfolio. Portsmouth also hosts a monthly business breakfast with all teams, where they can sit and discuss their progress as an informal peer-to-peer coaching exercise. Here they also benefit from guest speakers, games showcases, and involvement from regional and national trade associations.

SIMON BROOKES

Senior Lecturer University of Portsmouth and founder of the Southern Independent Games Network

"The SPY programme has been a fantastic way of sharpening student's self directed learning experience, albeit under the close observation and guidance of both business and games coaches. This guidance is essential for students to get the most out of their startup year out."

"It is equally important to ensure students understand that it's ok to fail, as it's their learning and development

that is paramount. By taking a year out to launch and run a startup, they are exposed to experiences they otherwise would not benefit from. Their communication skills, ability to motivate themselves and others, and understanding of what it takes to set up a company, make and publish a game, all whilst keeping food on the table and a roof over their heads, are massively enhanced."

"I believe this is an approach that could not only benefit other videogame courses, but business education of all kinds, across the UK."

ANDREW MARTIN

Entrepreneur, Head of Product at Sideways 6, Class of 2015 New Entrepreneur Foundation

"During my start-up year at the University of Portsmouth, I co-founded:

Little Kraken Games Studios; a software and games development company, developing and publishing pick up and play games for PC, Tablets, and Smart phones, contract applications for clients. Development focused on the Windows 8 and iOS development platforms.

"My role on the team as CEO gave me the opportunity to incorporate, develop and build a business whilst still at University, and provided an amazing opportunity to take theory and turn it into a practical money making business.

"We managed to scale an idea to a revenue generating business with a six figure turnover within three months. This also gave me an excellent grounding in starting and scaling a software / games development studio.

"Further to this it gave me the drive to continue my personal entrepreneurial journey after University. In May 2014 I was offered a place on the prestigious New Entrepreneur Foundation, I truly believe if it wasn't for the experience and insights I gained from taking a start-up year whilst at University, I would not be where I am today."

How Industry, Education and Government are working together

In this final section we would like to share some key initiatives, which were discussed on the day, and provide more information, as well as letting you know how you can get involved.

8.

THE NEXT GEN SKILLS ACADEMY

The UK's leading VFX (visual effects), animation and games employers, that includes Double Negative, Framestore, Moving Picture Company, Pinewood Studios, Sony Computer Entertainment Europe and Ubisoft Reflections – have joined forces to create a consortium that has secured nearly £6.5m of investment via the UKCES (UK Commission for Employment and Skills), to develop the next generation of talented animators, games designers and visual effects artists.

Led by Centroid, one of the industry's leading motion capture companies, and Amersham and Wycombe College - a leading provider of vocational courses and training, the NextGen Skills Academy www.nextgenskillsacademy.com will develop and offer new entry level qualifications, higher level apprenticeships, short courses and online learning opportunities, all designed to meet employers' skills needs. The initiative is also supported by a range of stakeholders including BFI, Creative England, Creative Skillset, and TIGA.

The project will benefit from more than £2.7m Government investment, over the next three years, employers providing a further £3.6m investment in cash and in kind.

Investment will support the development of a new online learning platform to deliver the latest training and skills for these fast moving industries, together with the development of new nationally-recognised qualifications. A regional network of high performing further education colleges will be established across England, delivering industry-led courses, delivering over 1300 qualifications, including 150 apprenticeship starts and over 1000 online training courses.

The project is expected to deliver:

- more than 1320 level 3, 4 and 5 qualifications, including 150 level 4 and 5 apprenticeship starts; and
- more than 1000 training courses, including short-courses, taster sessions and continual personal development, delivered by industry-assured trainers.

To find out more visit

www.nextgenskillsacademy.com

or contact the team via

info@nextgenskillsacademy.com
and [fngenacademy](https://www.facebook.com/ngenacademy)

8.1

THE TIGA ACCREDITATION PROGRAMME FOR
UNIVERSITIES AND COLLEGES

Games developers compete to a critical extent on the quality of their teams. TIGA has introduced the TIGA Accreditation process to ensure that universities and colleges can produce graduates with industry relevant skills. The TIGA Accreditation system accredits the very best undergraduate and postgraduate university courses enabling both prospective students and games developers to identify those courses that are producing industry ready graduates.

Key features of the TIGA Accreditation process:

- All TIGA Accredited courses teach skills required by the games industry. These skills are also becoming increasingly in demand in other related industries such as the synthetic training industry.
- Courses are examined by a panel of industry and academic experts to ensure that students are developing games industry skills as well as transferable skills (communication, team working, problem solving and so on) important to the games industry and at an appropriate level.
- As an important part of the accreditation process courses provide details of the percentage of their graduates finding work in the games industry and also in related industries.
- Each course is judged on its own merits and must demonstrate that it works closely with the games industry to stay up to date and relevant. By judging courses in this way TIGA Accreditation is suitable for a wide range of games courses, including those with a programming, art, design or business/entrepreneurial focus.
- Universities are also required to show that they have the resources (hardware, software, staff, labs and so on), curriculum, syllabi, quality systems and student support to deliver their courses.
- One of the key strengths of TIGA accreditation is that it is not confined to only 'technical' or 'art' courses, but also covers other games development

skills (such as games design, mobile games development, indie development entrepreneurship).

- Additionally it is able to keep up to date with the latest developments in games technologies and does not have prescribed lists of skills, which can become limiting in the extremely fast moving games industry. For a course to be accredited the university must have identified specific games developer skill needs and developed their course to meet these.
- Accreditation lasts for 5 years at which time courses are re-examined to ensure they are maintaining their standards. If successful they are re-accredited. Courses must also submit a yearly report to the TIGA Accreditation Committee.
- Accreditation is open to all TIGA education members. TIGA Accredited courses are supported through TIGA's educational initiatives and have assistance in remaining abreast of current industry practices. TIGA Accreditation is focused on campus based university and college courses.

The TIGA Accreditation programme for universities and colleges has been in development since January 2010. A number of models were explored before settling on the simple, robust and rigorous process of requiring courses to demonstrate that they are producing students who have developed skills that are in demand by games developers. Whilst also allowing courses the freedom to address a wide range of industry needs.

A first set of six courses, from the University of Portsmouth, Sheffield Hallam University and Bournemouth University, have either been accredited or are currently going through the accreditation process. A further sixteen courses are at the start of the TIGA Accreditation process.

For more information on TIGA Accreditation, please contact:

Dr Mark Eyles, University of Portsmouth:
mark.eyles@port.ac.uk.

8.2

THE UK UNIVERSITY GAME DEVELOPMENT INCUBATOR NETWORK

TIGA has proposed that Regional and National Games Development Incubators should be established at universities in each of the English and UK national regions to enable more successful start-ups.

These incubators would support both student and non-student creative enterprises and enhance the local connections between tech start-ups and academia. These connections are widely recognised as essential for sustained success in the global tech industries, as demonstrated by the likes of Cambridge's tech cluster and Silicon Valley in the USA.

TIGA's own research demonstrates there has been a surge of start-ups over the last few years: 44 per cent of UK games companies were started up in the last two years. This new wave of small studios needs the support of a local, relevant business community, and close proximity to the brightest graduate talent, if they are to maximise their potential.

The network could consist of 12 universities - one in each of the nine English regions and one in each of the other UK national regions, or it could consist of a consortium of universities working cooperatively within each region.

Each university or consortium could be designated to provide a Regional/National Game Development Incubator (R/N GDI) for start-ups. This would enable them to benefit from accumulated expertise in research and enterprise, as well as access to skilled graduates.

The UK Government, the Scottish Government, the Welsh Government and the Northern Ireland Executive could select the relevant and appropriate regional and national universities via a competitive process. Universities would only be designated as Regional/National Game Development Incubators if they met key criteria relating to infrastructure, industry links and if there was sufficient regional/national demand or potential for growth.

Universities are well placed to provide incubators to start-up teams of students: they typically have the physical space, some development equipment and the IT support needed to support start-ups.

The twelve distributed GDIs would be open to both students and to non-student start-ups, but encourage these start-ups to also approach external funders in order to make their ideas and businesses more sustainable. GDIs could liaise with Local Enterprise Partnerships, the Technology Strategy Board, and the EU - and where appropriate, the Scottish and Welsh Governments and the NI Executive - to access funding to commercialise start-up projects.

Establishing dedicated games development incubators in the Regions and Nations could help promote high technology video games clusters around the UK.

If you would like to discuss this proposal further and / or express your support, please contact TIGA CEO, Dr Richard Wilson via richard.wilson@tiga.org



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