Game Dev Open Day Q&A

Watch the full video replay at **cgspectrum.com/webinars/game-development-open-day**

Here are some of the questions asked during Game Dev Open Day. If you have any other questions about our programs or school, or wish to chat to us about your career goals, email **hello@cgspectrum.com**.

We look forward to welcoming you to the CG Spectrum community!

GENERAL SCHOOL QUESTIONS

When is the next intake for game development courses?

CG Spectrum has monthly intakes. You just need to enroll before the 25th of each month to start the following month. You can also submit your application form now if you wish to get the enrollment process started for a future intake!

➤ **cgspectrum.com/apply-now**

What is the application process?

1. Fill out the application form at **cgspectrum.com/apply-now.** Our student admissions team will process your application within 2–3 business days. (Our office operates Monday to Friday AEST.)
2. Receive confirmation—the admissions team will be in touch to confirm your course start date and preferred payment option, and a contract will be sent.
3. Sign contract and make payment—once your contract is signed and payment has been received, you'll be officially enrolled!
4. Start learning—you'll be matched with your industry mentor, receive your weekly Q&A call time, and get access to the student portal and private CG Spectrum community.

What kind of certificate do I get after courses?

On successful completion of the course, students receive a digital certificate which can be added to LinkedIn for employers to see.

I'm interested in a few different courses. How much is each course and are there payment plans in place?

Course fees are listed on individual course pages. Choose the course you're interested in and scroll down to 'pricing' to see fees and payment plan options.

➤ **cgspectrum.com/courses**

Can I study from home?

Yes you can! Our classes are 100% online. You just need a computer that meets the minimum specs (see individual course pages under cgspectrum.com/courses for the specs needed), and a good wi-fi connection.

Is it possible to study at CG Spectrum and work at the same time? Does the recommended 20 hours per week include practical exercises about a particular subject, or is it 20 hours of lessons with more time needed to do the exercises?

Many of our students have a full time job and balance their studies with us. As for the video lessons, it can differ depending on each course. Some courses may have 15 hours worth of videos and others might only have 5, but it changes weekly. Therefore, we tell students to allocate 20 hours a week to ensure they have time to watch all of them and complete the work.

I want to improve my skills before starting my CG Spectrum course, what kind of resources do you have?

Subscribe to our newsletter and keep an eye out for our podcast lanching in March 2022. You can also find blog posts, free resources, and past webinar replays on our site!

➤ **cgspectrum.com**

Check out our YouTube channel for amazing resources and hundreds of hours of livestream replays:

➤ **youtube.com/cgspectrum**

Is there a limit to the number of students CG Spectrum accepts?

There are 140+ industry mentors working with CG Spectrum. Class sizes are limited to 4 students max (or you can choose the 1-on-1 option), but depending on the course, demand and mentor availability, we can add more classes per month.

Are mentors available for questions prior to the feedback meeting if I run into difficulties throughout the week?

Definitely! You can contact your mentor through Slack and they will try to help you with any questions or difficulties you might face. Our Technical Assistants are also available to you, as well as a supportive community of students and mentors who will be happy you help you out.

What percentage of students get employment in the field after graduating?

Our advanced grad placement rates for 2018–20 were 70-80%, varying slightly across the courses we offer.

I want to do the introduction, the 9-month course, and the advanced 9-month course. Can I get a discount if I pay for all courses at once? And do I have to do all the courses in a row?

We offer a 10–25% discount if you pay upfront. We recommend taking one course at a time—you can take time off between courses, but we don't recommend taking a long break as you may lose momentum in your progress.

Should I attend a local college first or jump right into CG Spectrum?

It's totally up to you—we have students who have done both options. If you have to attend a local college, we suggest doing that first to give yourself a solid foundation. Then, when you take our course, you can specialize further and focus more on getting job-ready rather than just learning the basics.

We also have many students who don't go to traditional colleges or universities and learn only with us, with good success.

Are there networking opportunities at CG Spectrum? Will I be able to meet and collaborate with fellow students?

We fully support our students in reaching out and building contacts with mentors and students within our community on Slack—in fact, it's a priority for the school. CG Spectrum's Slack community is very supportive and active, and you will continue to be part of the community after graduation. We also have avenues to support and generate channels specifically for student group projects and help them become as successful as possible.

Do you offer career counseling or help someone get in contact with companies?

CG Spectrum's Career Development Manager is there to help! Learn more about our career services:

➤ **cgspectrum.com/career-services**

Is the school accredited?

For students in the United States: CG Spectrum has partnered with Philadelphia art school Hussian College, which is accredited by the Accrediting Commission of Career Schools and Colleges (ACCSC) to offer nine specialized online film and game programs for US based students.

Learn more at **cgspectrum.hussiancollege.edu**

For students outside the United States: At this stage, CG Spectrum is not affiliated with other regionally accredited bodies outside of the US. In saying that, the courses are still recognized as relevant training by major film and game studios in the industry.

CG Spectrum is a certified school through The Rookies and ranked one of the Top 50 Best Creative Media & Entertainment Art Schools in the World out of over 500 schools. CG Spectrum is also an Unreal Authorized Training Center, Unreal Academic Partner, Toon Boom Authorized Training Center, and a Houdini Certified School.

Is financial aid available?

Financial aid for students in the United States:
Financial aid and other financial services (such as FAFSA and other federal and state programs for college tuition) are available for qualifying students through our partner school Hussian College.

Visit **cgspectrum.hussiancollege.edu/financial-aid** to explore programs, admission requirements, and to see if you qualify for financial aid.

For students outside the United States: As CG Spectrum is a private global college, we are not registered to offer financial aid or grants. However, we do believe our courses offer the best possible value for the quality of education and personalized mentorship from industry professionals provided. We also have payment options available for all of our courses—from upfront payment with savings of up to 25% to monthly payment plans.

You may research lenders or educational grants in your area, as some banks and organizations may provide finance for education purposes.

Does CG Spectrum offer scholarships?

We are not currently offering any scholarships, but we may in the future.

INDUSTRY QUESTIONS

Is a strong portfolio as well as certification from CG Spectrum enough to get hired by a higher end or AAA studio?

Having a strong portfolio is the most important part of getting hired! What sets CG Spectrum apart from other schools is that you'll have direct support to create a great portfolio from both your mentor, the school community (other students, mentors, and Technical Assistants), and the Career Development Manager. Taking advantage all of these resources can help set you up to be job-ready, especially for a higher end studio, which can be more competitive.

Some studios require 2–3 years of experience. If I graduate with a strong portfolio, can I still get a job?

Many studios write that they require several years of experience, but with a strong portfolio that demonstrates your skills, there's a good chance that networking and applying can get you by if you nail the interviews. Other factors such as studio size, your geographic location, willingness to relocate, whether the studio accepts remote positions, etc., must also be considered.

Do I need a college degree to get into game development and land a job in the industry?

We have a very realistic approach when it comes to the games and film industry, and have learned that studios are not concerned with qualifications and whether students have a degree or diploma from an accredited institution.

At the end of the day, studios are primarily concerned about the applicant's portfolio and skills. Supervisors only have 10–15 seconds to review each job application, as they're on tight deadlines and don't bother looking at a resume unless the portfolio is very impressive.

Students could spend thousands on a degree, but if the quality of their work is average or sub-par, they simply won't get a job. All of our courses are portfolio-based and exclude the unnecessary 'units and subjects' that studios don't care about.

Are your courses recognized in the UK (and elsewhere) for the game industry?

Yes—we have students all over the world, with quite a few in the UK who have found work after graduating. Our Game Programming Department Head, Firas Hosn, is currently located in the UK too!

Is the game industry friendly to older newcomers? I have worked in the independent film industry for 10+ years, and am considering transitioning to game development.

Yes—there are many "older" game designers who have or are switching careers. Your life experiences and transferable skills can help a lot as a game developer, so there shouldn't be a lot of bias against someone who is switching careers.

How common is remote work in the industry?

More and more jobs in games are remote these days. Things may change in the years to come for some studios, but especially because of the pandemic, many studios went remote full time.

What are some entry level jobs for someone who focuses on modeling and texturing?

Check out the career pathways section on our website—you can find the different roles, skills required, responsibilities, and average salary for positions in the industry:

➤ **cgspectrum.com/career-pathways**

I've been studying Python—is this type of code acceptable for the industry?

We teach C++, but Python is also great for scripting, creating tools, and being a tech designer.

GENERAL GAME COURSE QUESTIONS

What are the computer requirements for the game development courses?

Minimum computer specs are listed on each course page. One thing to consider with game development is that you want to be running something your consumer is going to use, so we avoid specialty video cards that may produce artifacts or bugs that a common consumer wouldn't have and miss the ones they will.

Who will I be mentored by?

All of our film and game mentors are industry professionals with several years of experience working at major studios on blockbuster films and best-selling games. Meet some of our mentors:

➤ **cgspectrum.com/mentors**

Do your game courses teach Unreal Engine 5?

We are currently using Unreal Engine 4 in our courses, and will eventually revise content for Unreal 5. Almost everything in UE4 also works in UE5, so it's not a waste to learn UE4. If you are already working with UE5, you can continue to use it in the course.

Where are you coding?

Students currently use Unreal Engine 4 in the courses. In Game Design, you learn about Blueprints (visual scripting) while in Game Programming, you will also use C++.

Do students all work on the same projects/content in the courses or is there freedom to choose the type of project yourself?

You can find the curriculum for each of the courses on our website to see what will be covered and what type of assignments you'll be working on. If you choose the private 1-on-1 study option, there is more flexibility than a small group class (4 students).

There are two major differences between a small group and 1-on-1 mentoring: The first is that the mentor is able to tailor the course a bit to suit your personal goals and skillset. If you want to focus on a particular area more than another, then the mentor has some flexibility to do that. The second difference is that the live Q&A times are more flexible, and if you're 1-on-1 with the mentor, they spend the entire hour each week with just you.

Is there a course which blends both game design and programming?

No, but some students take both courses to learn about both aspects in order to either become a more technical designer or a gameplay programmer.

I'm not necessarily looking for a job in the industry, but want to gain enough skills to make my own games in my spare time. Would one of the courses be enough for this?

If you complete the Game Design course, you will learn how to document the game, make it fun, learn theory, and learn how to implement a game in Unreal Engine.

However, to make a game fully on your own, you do need a lot of technical skills, so it won't be easy to make a game all by yourself, but either the game design and/ or game programming course can begin to prepare you.

There is a lot to know to make a game by yourself, so think about how you might find others online (like through the CG Spectrum community) to help you.

FOUNDATIONS

What courses would you recommend for people who want to be a technical artist in game industry?

Check out the Foundations of Game Art & Animation Course to understand art, and the Real-time 3D Technical Art & Virtual Production Course (or the Game Programming Course) to understand the technical side and working within Unreal Engine. You really need to understand both worlds, which is why it's a hard job, but in high demand.

I am interested in game animation. Which is the right course for me?

Check out the Foundations for Game Art & Animation course which covers modeling, rigging and animation.

▶ cgspectrum.com/courses/game-art-and-animation-course

GAME DESIGN

Is any previous knowledge expected for the game design course? What can I do to prepare myself before enrolling to make the most the course?

While an "introduction," the Introduction to Game Design term is still incredibly difficult and covers a lot of materia, including 25+ hours of lecture videos and over a dozen assignments students need to complete. All future course material will build upon this foundation. The course will cover some basic concepts, teach the basics of using Unreal Engine, teach the fundamentals of system and level design, and teach you how to deconstruct games properly and design using a systemic approach.

If you have not released an indie game or worked professionally to design PC or console AAA games, we highly recommend you not to skip the intro term. Even if you have designed mobile games, VR, or other genres or platforms of games, we do not recommend skipping it as the nuances are different in each.

Check out Game Design mentor Troy Dunniway's past streams on YouTube if you want to prepare for your courses:

▶ youtube.com/cgspectrum

What will I end the 3 month Game Design course with?

You will create a game pitch document, a simple game design document, a simple level whitebox in Unreal Engine, and a sample prototype level inside a spaceship. Learn more:

▶ cgspectrum.com/courses/introduction-to-game-design#curriculum

Is education in engineering or architecture necessary for designing stuff like buildings for games? Can we specialize in environment modeling without a background like this?

To create environment art, it helps to know architecture, but you don't need an official background in it, just an interest and knowledge to learn.

I have a background in programming and teaching myself Houdini. Will these skills help me in the Game Design program?

Yes! The more technical you are as a game designer, the better you will do. Game designers need a wide assortment of skills and having strong technical skills is critical to your success as a game designer, so keep it up!

I did not study physics in high school but have a strong background in visual arts and I also take math that covers topics like higher calculus, vectors and more. Is this enough to learn game design?

There are no pre-requisites for game design. It helps to have art and technical backgrounds and good math skills are very useful. Besides basic computer skills, nothing is officially required, so you definitely don't need to know physics to be successful as a designer.

I've released few games in a studio and work in the industry as a designer with Unity/UE4/5 experience. I'm mostly interested in core game design knowledge, mechanics, studying various case studies. I want to have fun with the core game design/fun design knowledge. Is the Intro to Game Design Course for me?

YES! That is exactly what we teach in the course!

Is there a course for indie-style games or will it be included in Game Design? Or are you focused on AAA style games?

The good thing about mentorship and how our courses work is that there is some flexibility within the curriculum, especially if you choose the private 1-on-1 mentorship option. You can tweak the time you spend with your mentor to fit your personal needs and goals. So if you plan to focus on indie games, you can definitely benefit from the courses!

If I want to work at a studio developing an RPG or MMO, or even creating my own, would the game design program be right for me?

Yes—we cover a lot of various mechanics for RPGs. They are just hard to build by yourself, so we don't try and build them, but you will learn a lot of the basics needed for RPG design.

GAME PROGRAMMING

I'm planning on taking the Intro to Programming Course. How can I prepare to get the most out of it?

Start programming—don't wait. Start with **cplusplus.com** to learn the language. Try to make some simple code, a calculator, or a text-based game. This will help you speed through the intro course and touch some advanced subjects, which will then allow you to make more awesome UE projects.

Do I have to know data structures and linear algebra to be a competent game programmer?

You definitely need to know data structures. Knowing linear algebra is a plus, but you could be working on systems that don't require it.

How many games will I build in the programming course? Solo or team projects?

Ideally, you will have at least 3 projects. Currently, the course content is based on solo projects, but we have a collab channel so you can team up with other students and create a group game. There are also challenges you can work on in groups.

Would you consider adding an open session for game programming students?

We have bonus open sessions for a number of study areas exclusively for CG Spectrum students. We are rolling out more individual course-specific info sessions soon, including a Houdini FX one in March 2022! Stay tuned for our game programming session.

Remember, these sessions are for all students—you don't have to be a student of that discipline to attend. They're a great way to learn complementary skills and meet your fellow students and mentors.

REAL-TIME 3D
& VIRTUAL PRODUCTION

Is lots of programming involved in the virtual production course?

There isn't any programming besides some blueprint wiring for different types of setups. Not to say there aren't programming opportunities within the virtual production industry!

Is there a pathway in the real-time program to get into the film industry?

Yes—it's a new industry and we don't know exactly what it will look like in the future, but the film industry has made major investments in real-time virtual production! It's definitely connected to the film industry.

What course is recommended for someone who wants to go into the cinematic side of games like trailers and cutscenes?

Game cinematics are usually very similar to the virtual production pipeline—it's about working with motion capture and camera work within a quick turnaround timeline. The difference can be that the assets you're using are also used within the gameplay and the game design is driving the direction of the story.

Check out our Real-Time 3D Technical Art & Virtual Production course to learn more and to see some student work:

▸ **cgspectrum.com/courses/realtime-3d-virtual-production-course**

Is there a course for FX in games?

Yes! We offer an Introduction to Houdini FX Course and will soon be hosting a course information session solely dedicated to our Houdini FX courses. Daniel Hourigan (FX Department Head) and Brenda Grajales (Student Admissions), will be hosting this session. If you are intersted in attending, email us and we will provide all details: hello@cgspectrum.com

Would the Digital Illustration Course include creating splash art like for Riot Games?

Yes, that's included in our Advanced Digital Illustration course, along with many other styles of illustration. View the entire curriculum at www.cgspectrum.com/courses/advanced-illustration-course#curriculum

What kinds of assignments would we expect to be given in the 3D animation course? Would we be given some resources to start with or are those expected to be created by students?

We have materials that are available to you as part of our tutorial flow. All of our assignments have accompanying material to attain a finished work.

I started 3D modeling 1.5 years ago, and want to do the advanced 3D modeling course. What are the prerequisites/portfolio requirements to apply for the course?

For the 9-month Advanced 3D Modeling course, your portfolio should demonstrate experience or education working in Maya, ZBrush and Substance Painter, and evidence that you have modeled a humanoid character and an entire environment.

If you are unsure if your skills are sufficient, send us your portfolio and we'll arrange a review by the department head and a possible student interview, depending on circumstances. Learn more:

▸ **cgspectrum.com/3d-modeling**