

Video Game Art & Design at College of the North Atlantic
Frequently Asked Questions and Suggestions for Student Success
Updated December 2025

Program Description: <http://www.cna.nl.ca/program/video-game-art-and-design>

FAQs

What skills, knowledge, characteristics, and attributes enhance success in this program and in the workplace?

- Dedication and participation are important
- Artistic acumen with the desire for improvement
- Writing skills at the college level or above
- Good organizational skills
- Attention to detail
- Strong work ethic
- Basic computer skills
- The ability to present your work to others and receive critique and constructive feedback
- Providing critique in a constructive manner

I want to do programming for video games, is this the right course for me?

The short answer is no.

The Video Game Art and Design program is an Applied Arts program, so it is heavily focused on the creative aspects of game production. We use a method called visual scripting rather than language-based programming, to create our interactions, however, some people refer to visual scripting as 'programming'. This allows us to focus heavily on game design, theory, art creation, document writing, and all the numerous aspects involved in the creation of original games.

If your primary interest is becoming a video game programmer, and not the art or design aspects of game creation, then this may not be the best program fit.

I am really good at playing video games and I am considering a career in video games; can you tell me what it takes?

While being good at playing video games is a great experience as reference when designing games, playing games and making games aren't the same thing. Making games typically means you are creating a product with the intention of engaging others. Making games requires hard work, a variety of skills, and a lot of patience.

There are many different types of games and audiences. Successful students are typically dedicated to their studies and are willing to put in the time required to complete projects and assignments.

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Can I see examples of student projects?

Here is a video with some examples: <https://youtu.be/ayrIFgPOJ1Y>

I am not a 'hard core' gamer, will I fit in?

The Video Game Art and Design program covers a wide range of game genres and styles including board games, educational games, training simulations, and casual games. Professionalism, respect for various perspectives, teamwork, and courtesy are practiced. More detailed information can be found about the diverse population of gamers in Canada within the Entertainment Software Association of Canada's resources, please see the Labour Market Information section below.

Am I too old to be in the program?

We encourage lifelong learning and welcome diversity. Our students range from those fresh out of high school to those with prior education/work experience who are looking for a change. Just like games themselves, game art and game design are for people of all ages and backgrounds.

I am wondering how the program is organized? Is there regular homework?

Like many post-secondary programs, the Video Game Art & Design program is organized into courses. Classwork is typically a combination of reading, writing, quizzes, projects, and assignments. The program takes a creative, applied approach to game design with emphasis on theory, document writing, creative writing, and creating original art assets.

The program is online **and** requires logging to the CNA distributed learning platform regularly but has flexible timing (classes are asynchronous). It is paced according to each course, for example, a course might have a module that needs to be completed within a one- or two-week time frame, and assignments or activities have due dates during the semester.

Year 1 serves as a foundation in art and an introduction to game theory and storytelling. Years 2 & 3 mainly revolve around creating 2D and 3D playable games and levels with original art. Effective time management will help to maximize productivity.

While online program courses provide some flexibility, some students find the time to work at a part-time job while enrolled. Please consider that this is a full-time program and working full-time job hours while taking a full-time college program may be difficult.

I want to begin practicing. What should I do?

Draw often and keep an on-going sketchbook and ideas written in a journal. You will learn digital drawing, 3D art, and game engine(s) while in the program, but if you already practice drawing using a digital tablet or laptop with touchscreen display, it is recommended to continue practicing both on paper and digitally.

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It would be helpful to practice and become familiar with Photoshop, and Microsoft Office (especially Word and Excel) on a basic level. Other advanced game creation and art software will be taught from a beginner level during the program.

What are the recommended computer specs and equipment for the program?

An example of the **Video Game Art & Design Tools and Equipment** list can be located on the college website through the following link: [Distributed Learning Services - CNA Online Learning - Programs and Courses](#) but please keep in mind that the **items may be different and updated each year.**

***Note:** If you already have a computer that meets the minimum requirements of Adobe Photoshop CC and D2I online courses in general, you may use this for **Year 1 and choose to wait until holiday sales or by Fall of Year 2 to purchase the more powerful computer required, as described in this tools and equipment list above.**

What types of jobs could someone obtain coming out of this program?

After completing this program, graduates have found entry level positions in games, educational software, training simulations, testing, and related media. Job roles like Game Designer, Art Director, or Producer at a larger game company are usually earned after gaining some experience in the game industry, although there could be an entry level position in some cases like in smaller companies and start-ups.

Some examples positions:

- Video Game Artist (2D, 3D, UI, characters, environment, etc.)
- Video Game Tester
- Independent Game Developer
- 3D Modeler for Simulations
- Scenario Designer for Simulations
- Level Designer
- Scenario Designer for Games
- MMO Community Manager or Referee
- Streamer/ Video Host
- Game Designer
- Producer

There is also a focus on business, and the route of indie game development is explored to introduce:

- Entrepreneurism
- Small game studio start-up
- Working as a Freelance Artist or Designer

Additionally, skills learned in the VGAD Program can be applied to roles in other fields of entertainment, education, and multimedia development.

What are the job opportunities in NL or elsewhere for this type of work?

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The game industry is vast and provides many opportunities for qualified applicants. In addition to what people would typically think of as game-related fields, such as entertainment, opportunities can be found in **education, marine simulation, robotics, and many other industries that use digital media and virtual reality**. Working remotely over the internet from any location has been present in the game industry for over 25 years, and remote work has been gaining more growth recently.

There are video game companies in St. John's, NL and Atlantic Canada. Montreal, Vancouver, and Toronto are centers for game development in Canada. Simulation companies in St. John's develop world class marine simulations and training, and graduates have found good opportunities in that field. A graduate of the program has even gone as far as the USA to work at Epic Games, this was after gaining some experience at a local company.

A Few Examples:

NL Game and Simulation Companies	
Other Ocean Interactive	https://otherocean.com/
Carnegie Learning	https://www.carnegielearning.ca/?source=zorbitemath.com
Virtual Marine Technology	https://virtualmarine.ca/
GRI	https://www.grisim.com/

Atlantic Canada	
HB Studios	http://www.hb-studios.com/
Gogii Games	http://www.gogiigames.com/
Red Space	https://www.redspace.com/

Across Canada	
Ubisoft	http://toronto.ubisoft.com/
EA	https://www.ea.com/careers
Behaviour Interactive	https://www.bhvr.com/
BioWare	http://www.bioware.com/careers/
Beenox	https://beenox.com/
Rockstar Toronto	https://www.rockstargames.com/careers/offices/rockstar-toronto

Worldwide	
Game Dev Map	http://gamedevmap.com/
Search Resources	https://www.gamesjobsdirect.com/ https://remotegamejobs.com/ https://polycount.com/categories/work-opportunities

What are the chances of landing a job in the field once I complete this program?

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The needs of the industry can change rapidly, and there are often fluctuations in the job market. Check industry websites (listed above) for more information.

Hiring in the video game industry is talent or skill-based and competitive. During the 3 years of the VGAD program, students learn the necessary skills to develop both 2D and 3D games; there is also a strong focus within the program towards entrepreneurship. Some graduates have set their sights on creating their own opportunities by developing indie games, freelancing, or selling digital assets.

Unfortunately, there can be no guarantee of work being available once you finish. The game industry does, however, have a very strong presence in Canada. There are many skills gained through the program that are transferable to other pursuits.

Labour Market Information:

Entertainment Software Association of Canada is a great resource <http://www.theesa.ca/>

- Look for annual reports about the game industry in Canada
- ESA YouTube Videos: <https://www.youtube.com/@TheESACanada/videos>

Can you help me get in touch with a specific person or studio to contact?

One way to reach out is to find general or human resource email addresses or contact forms on company websites. Sorry, but instructors cannot help prospective students by giving out specific industry contact info due to the volume of requests and the busy schedules of their industry contacts.

What is your best advice for someone going into this program and hoping to work in this field?

- The culture of game development practiced in the online courses is articulate, professional, diverse, cooperative, welcoming, and respectful to others (people skills which can be attractive to potential employers after graduation)
- Play nice and maintain a good impression on your classmates and instructors for continued connections in the future, they are your network!
- Some students find their niche while in school (art, level design, game design, game audio, writer, etc.) and then develop their focus further after college by working with fellow graduates on projects
- Keeping skills updated with the evolving software 'tools of the trade' after graduation

APPLYING TO THE VIDEO GAME ART & DESIGN PROGRAM

College Admissions: <https://www.cna.nl.ca/admissions/>

Where are the program specific application instructions?

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Go to the program page <https://www.cna.nl.ca/program/video-game-art-and-design> and click on the tabs to see more info such as Admission Requirements and Courses. The Portfolio does not include general or existing work; it has very specific instructions for creating drawings and an essay.

How soon after applying should the portfolio be sent?

The recommendation is to have your portfolio items submitted as soon as possible after submitting your application.

What are the CNA & Distributed Learning (DL) sessions, dates, fees?

- Distributed Learning Home: <https://dls.cna.nl.ca/index.shtml>
- Key Dates: <https://dls.cna.nl.ca/datesdeadlines.shtml>
- Program Equipment & Supplies: https://dls.cna.nl.ca/future/supply_lists.shtml
- DL Registration: <http://dls.cna.nl.ca/current/registration.shtml>
- CNA Fees and Charges: <http://www.cna.nl.ca/Admissions/Fees-And-Charges.aspx>

CONTACTS:

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- Adam Power, Email: adam.power@cna.nl.ca

College of the North Atlantic:

- CNA website: [College of the North Atlantic](http://www.collegeofthenorthatlantic.ca)
- Phone: 1(888) 982-2268

CNA Online Learning:

- Website: <https://dls.cna.nl.ca/index.shtml>
- Email: learn@cna.nl.ca
- Phone: (877) 465-2250

CNA Online Guidance Counsellor:

- eCounsellor: <https://dls.cna.nl.ca/future/ecounsellor.shtml>

CNA Online Student Development Officer: (mainly grants/funding, and non-academic support)

- Email: dlsdo@cna.nl.ca