QUALIFICATION SPECIFICATION

gateway qualifications

Level 2 Award in Games Design and Development

Access to HE
Apprenticeships
Digital
Employability & Enterprise
English & Maths
ESOL
Personal & Social Development
Professional Development
Vocational

This qualification specification covers the following qualification:

Qualification Number	Qualification Title
603/6539/0	Gateway Qualifications Level 2 Award in Games Design and Development

Version and date	Change detail	Section/page reference
2.0 (January 2026)	Specification template updated	n/a

The previous version of this qualification specification is available in Prism. Search for the qualification in the Qualification Library and select the 'Documents' tab.

About this qualification specification

Gateway Qualifications is a nationally regulated Awarding Organisation that supports education and training providers through its strong relationships, adaptability and expert team.

This qualification specification contains everything you need to know about this qualification and should be used by everyone involved in the planning, delivery and assessment of the Gateway Qualifications Level 2 Award in Games Design and Development.

This document should be read in conjunction with the Gateway Qualifications' Centre Handbook and other publications available on the website, which contain more detailed guidance on assessment and quality assurance practice.

In order to offer this qualification, you must be a Gateway Qualifications recognised centre and be approved to offer this qualification.

If your centre is not yet recognised, please contact our Business Development team to discuss becoming a Gateway Qualifications recognised centre:

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Email: enquiries@gatewayqualifications.org.uk
Website: Gateway Qualifications

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Introduction

The qualification has been approved by the Office of Qualifications and Examinations Regulation (Ofqual) that regulates qualifications, examinations and assessments in England and Qualifications Wales, the regulator of non-degree qualifications and the qualifications system in Wales.

This qualification is designed for learners to develop an initial idea into a game prototype. They will develop an initial idea into a 2D or 3D game. They will create visuals to show what the game will look like, as well as a design specification that documents all aspects of the game. They will then create the assets for the game engine and add interaction to make a playable game. This unit also allows learners to obtain feedback on their work for review and further development.

This award is ideal for flexible delivery, whether as a stand-alone, bite-sized qualification or as part of a broader curriculum. It can be effectively integrated with other units or qualifications to create coherent learning pathways that support progression in digital and IT skills. This qualification is suitable for learners aged 16 and over.

1. Qualification overview

1.1 Qualification purpose

The purpose of this qualification is to offer a focused qualification that supports learners aged 16 and above in developing core games design and development skills as a route into employment or further study within the digital sector. Designed to be accessible to those new to the subject area, the qualification provides a further introduction to both creative and technical processes involved in game creation, helping learners build confidence and practical capability.

Through this qualification, learners develop fundamental knowledge of different types of computer games and the purposes they serve, while applying creative and problem-solving skills to design a game in response to a client brief. Learners plan, build, and test a functional game prototype, gaining hands-on experience of turning ideas into workable digital solutions, and critically review their finished product to develop reflective and evaluative skills.

The qualification offers clear value by equipping learners with transferable skills such as creativity, logical thinking, collaboration, and self-evaluation that are relevant across a wide range of digital pathways. It provides a strong foundation for progression to further study or entry-level roles within games design and development, and the wider digital sector, supporting learners to take their first steps towards sustainable digital careers.

1.2 Aims and objectives

The aim of this qualification is to provide learners with the core knowledge and practical skills needed to design and develop a simple computer game. This qualification supports progression into further study or entry-level opportunities within the games design and development field and broader digital sector.

The objectives of the qualification are to provide learners with the opportunity to:

- understand key features, genres, and characteristics of different types of computer games
- apply creative and technical skills to design a computer game that meets the needs of a client brief
- develop and test a functional computer game, demonstrating problem-solving and iterative improvement
- review the completed game, identifying strengths, areas for development, and potential enhancements

1.3 Key information

Qualification summary	
Qualification title	Gateway Qualifications Level 2 Award in Games Design and Development
Qualification type	Regulated Qualifications Framework (RQF)

Qualification number	603/6539/0
Learning aim reference number	60365390
Level	Level 2
Guided learning hours (GLH)	48
Total qualification time (TQT)	60
Credit value	6
Sector subject area	6.1 Digital Technology (practitioners)
Age appropriateness	16-18, 19+
Grading scale	Pass/Fail
Assessment method	Portfolio of Evidence
Regulation information	This qualification is regulated by Ofqual for use in England and Qualification Wales for use in Wales. In Wales the qualification is regulated as Designated.

1.4 Entry requirements

There are no specific prior skills/knowledge learners must have for this qualification.

Centres must ensure that learners have the correct information and advice when selecting qualifications to ensure that the qualification will meet their needs.

Centres must ensure that this qualification suits the age and abilities of their learners by ensuring that learners can meet the relevant literacy, numeracy, digital, and health and safety requirements of the qualification.

Learners enrolled on this qualification should not undertake another qualification at the same level with a similar title or content, as this could impact funding eligibility due to duplicated learning.

Centres are responsible for registering learners via the Gateway Qualifications' online registration portal Quartz. Learner registration guidance is available on our website, Registering learners.

1.5 Progression opportunities

On completion of this qualification learners will be equipped with the basic knowledge, understanding and skills related to games design and development.

Successful completion of the Level 2 Award in Games Design and Development could allow learners to progress onto:

- Gateway Qualifications Level 2 Award/Certificate/Extended Certificate/Diploma in Digital and IT Skills
- Level 2 qualifications in Digital and IT
- entry-level employment roles related to games design and development

A full in-depth careers information, advice and guidance session should be completed for learners before, during and after completion of learning, finding them the most appropriate progression pathways unique to them and based on their ability and aspirations.

1.6 Equity, diversity and inclusion

At Gateway Qualifications we aim to create an environment which celebrates differences and strives for equitable opportunities and outcomes for all. More than a mere commitment, this Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion Policy stands as a framework, informing every aspect of the work we do. It is our aim to support our staff and learners of all abilities, ensuring the development, delivery, and awarding of qualifications in a fair and inclusive manner.

Whilst developing our qualifications, we have given due consideration to eliminating discrimination, harassment and victimisation, advancing equality of opportunity, and fostering good relations between people who share a relevant protected characteristic (as defined in the Equality Act 2010) and those who do not.

For full details please see the Equity, Diversity and Inclusion Policy.

1.7 Resource requirements

There are no prescribed resource requirements for this qualification. However, centres must ensure that learners have access to appropriate and sufficient resources to support the achievement of all learning outcomes.

Centres may find it useful to access resources from Cisco Networking Academy.

1.8 Achieving this qualification

The qualification will be awarded to learners who successfully demonstrate their achievement of all learning outcomes of the unit in the qualification.

The knowledge, skills and understanding that will be assessed as part of the qualification are set out within the unit details.

To be awarded this qualification learners must successfully achieve the single mandatory unit.

Mandatory unit

Unit reference	Unit title	Unit level	Credit value	GLH
T/618/3684	Games Design and Development	Level 2	6	48

1.9 Indicative content

The examples included within the indicative content are provided as guidance only. They are not exhaustive and should not be regarded as limiting the range of knowledge, skills or understanding that may be taught, developed or assessed. Centres may incorporate additional relevant material, contexts or approaches as appropriate, provided these remain aligned with the stated learning outcomes and overall requirements of the qualification.

2. Assessment

2.1 Assessment overview

The qualification is assessed through a portfolio of evidence which is internally assessed by centre staff and externally quality assured by Gateway Qualifications. For more information, please see the Centre Guide to Best Practice in Internal Assessment.

Each learner must build a portfolio of evidence generated from appropriate assessment tasks which demonstrates achievement of all the learning outcomes associated with the unit.

Assessors may use alternative assessment methods as long as they are fit for purpose, meet the requirements of the qualification and ensure the integrity of the assessment process.

On completion of the unit learners must declare that the work produced is their own and the Assessor must counter sign this.

Should a learner not achieve the required standard to pass an assessment, further teaching and learning should take place before attempting the assessment again.

The qualification will be awarded to learners who successfully demonstrate their achievement of all learning outcomes of the unit.

2.2 Assessment language

This qualification will be assessed in English. All learners work must be in English. British Sign Language can be used where it is permitted for the purpose of a reasonable adjustment.

2.3 Explanation of assessment terms used in this qualification

Gateway Qualifications has produced guidance to support consistent delivery of units across all centres offering our qualifications.

For clarification on how to interpret and deliver the command words used in our assessments, please refer to the Assessment Command Word Definitions document, available on the Gateway Qualifications website Internal & External Assessment Practice - Gateway Qualifications under Assessment Design.

3. Unit details

3.1 Mandatory unit

Games Design and Development

Unit reference:	T/618/3684
Unit summary:	In this unit, learners will develop an initial idea into a 2D or 3D game. They will create visuals to show what the game will look like, as well as a design specification that documents all aspects of the game. They will then create the assets for the game engine and add interaction to make a playable game. This unit also allows learners to obtain feedback on their work for review and further development.
Unit level:	Level 2
GLH:	48
Credit value:	6
Grading method:	Pass/Fail

LEARNING OUTCOMES	ASSESSMENT CRITERIA
The learner will:	**The learner can:**
1. Be able to understand different types of computer games.	1.1 Describe different types of computer games and their features. 1.2 Explain how different components are used in the design of a computer game.
2. Be able to design a computer game in response to a client brief.	2.1 Design a computer game with storyline, characters and gameplay. 2.2 Produce a design specification in an appropriate format. 2.3 Create an asset list.
3. Be able to develop and test a computer game.	3.1 Edit game assets considering file formats, types and naming conventions. 3.2 Render and import assets into game engine. 3.3 Develop a computer game for a specific platform using a game engine. 3.4 Test a computer game obtaining feedback from others.

4. Be able to review a computer game.	4.1 Review how the game meets the client brief, making recommendations for further improvements. 4.2 Describe how own performance could be developed.

Indicative Content:

AC 1.1: Describe different types of computer games and their features, for example:

- different types of computer games: simulations, adventure, puzzle, action, combat, sports, educational
- features: gameplay, difficulty, feedback, multiplayer, challenges, online games

AC 1.2: Explain how different components are used in the design of a computer game, for example:

- components: AI, graphics, audio, controller, motion sensing, GUI, fundamentals, characters, connectivity of elements, how character interacts with game
- platforms: consoles (Xbox, Playstation, Switch), PC/Mac, handheld devices, smartphones, tablets, TV, in relation to speed, connectivity, appropriateness for game, benefits/limitations
- visual style: terrain, architecture, objects, characters, non-playing characters (NPC), feedback interface, perspectives (2D, 3D, first-person, third-person, scrolling, aerial, context-sensitive), full motion video (FMV)
- game play (what the player does):goals, e.g. what the player needs to achieve in the game, challenges, e.g. what the player must overcome, rewards, e.g. what the player will receive for completing goals or challenges, player actions, e.g. run, jump, rules, e.g. valid moves, how high the player can jump, game mechanics, e.g. inventory, scoring, win condition

2.2: Produce a design specification in an appropriate format, for example:

- design specification must include a proposal, concept imagery and asset list to demonstrate ideas and provide detailed information on the game, what that game is about, information about the avatar used by the player, e.g. character, vehicle, cursor, what the game is about (story or context), maps of the levels, objectives, encounters, navigation, pickups, details of the game play (what the player actually does)
- learners should ensure their proposal is realistic and achievable with regards to time constraints, available resources, technical knowledge, skills and limitations and include details about target audience, genre, working title, purpose, inspiration, content, research, timeline, resources, platform, storyline, gameplay

AC 2.3: Create an asset list, for example:

- character, locations, vehicles, creatures etc, concept art examples for primary assets, storyboard, moodboard, narrative

AC 3.1: Edit game assets considering file formats, types and naming conventions, for example:

- experiment with a variety of visual styles for primary assets to produce a visual concept for the game. The types of visual assets produced will vary depending on the type of game and the intended platform, and will depend on whether the game is 2D or 3D. Learners should show consideration of copyright and attribution for third party assets
- assets to include in 2D games: sprites (characters/avatar), matt paintings or pixel tiles for background, sprites (buildings and organic environment assets), graphics for interactive objects, e.g. doors, pickups, buttons, lifts, etc
- assets to include in 3D games: 3D character models, 3D environment art assets – buildings, organic, e.g. trees, rocks, interactive objects, e.g. doors, vehicles, buttons/lifts, etc, textures for 3D assets and environment
- sound assets: ambient sound, music, sound effects
- animated assets: animated sprites, walk cycles

AC 3.2: Render and import assets into game engine, for example:

- edit assets as appropriate for game and platform, appropriate file size and poly/pixel counts (target platform specifications), appropriate file types: jpeg, psd, bmp, ase, obj, wav, mp3, appropriate naming conventions (each game engine will have specific rules on naming files), alpha channels for textures and sprites (correctly rendered), checking normals for 3D models (correct direction), for 3D engines only
- import assets into the engine: 2D engines, e.g. GameMaker, RPG maker, IWGame and 3D engines, e.g. UnrealSDK, Unity, CryEngine

AC 3.3: Develop a computer game for a specific platform using a game engine, for example:

Although 2D and 3D games will require different methods to create the game environment, the process is the same and should include:

- setting up the level (initial settings, screen resolution/FPS (frames per second)/world size/additive or subtractive 3D world)
- creating the environment:
    - 2D engines - interface, background imagery, e.g. fixed appearance, side scrolling
    - 3D engine - BSP (binary space partitions), grey box
    - lighting - 2D transparency effects, 3D light placement, lighting effects
    - atmospheric/decorative animation - swaying foliage, water surfaces, weather effects, fire and smoke, computer screens and machinery
- add scripts to create interactivity: scripted animation, e.g. cursor animation, adding triggers and events, scripted movers, e.g. animating doors, platforms , scripting buttons, e.g. actions, settings, to provide information, e.g. to obtain facts and statistics/interactive characters, dialogue/cursor information, mouse rollover states, movement, e.g. navigation keys, steering, weapon movement, player actions, e.g. run, jump, using colliders as triggers, text instructions, e.g. walk north, get key, pickups, scripting game mechanics, e.g. inventory, scoring, win condition

AC 3.4: Test a computer game obtaining feedback from others, for example: • test game, the scripts, interactivity and gameplay functionality, make any necessary changes, optimise settings and publish the game for a specific platform, e.g. as an app for tablet and smartphones, exe for PC, etc, refine the game based on feedback
AC 4.2: Describe how own performance could be developed, for example: • learner should include reflections on the quality and fitness for purpose of the design specification and game (strengths and areas for development), taking into account user feedback, own self-assessment, feedback from others (peers, tutors) • more efficient or effective ways of working, ways to improve the design and prototype, develop own digital skills (graphics, animation, game engines, etc)

4. Quality assurance

As the portfolio of evidence is assessed by the centre's assessor, the centre must operate an internal quality assurance process. This ensures that qualification standards are being applied consistently within a centre through training, standardisation, sampling of marking and feedback.

4.1 Internal quality assurance

Centres should refer to the online Centre Handbook for further guidance on staffing requirements.

A centre's internal quality assurance process is led by the Internal Quality Assurer (IQA), who is responsible for identifying and promoting best practices in teaching, learning, and assessment. They are responsible for:

- monitoring assessment practices to ensure they meet our standards
- sampling assessment decisions and learner work to verify accuracy and consistency
- observing assessors and tutors, providing feedback and support for improvement
- facilitating standardisation meetings to align assessment practices across teams
- supporting assessors with professional development and guidance
- identifying and promoting best practices in teaching, learning, and assessment
- handling appeals and complaints related to assessment outcomes
- maintaining detailed records for audits and external quality assurance visits

The portfolio of evidence is subject to internal quality assurance whereby a centre regularly samples and evaluates its assessment practices and decisions, and acts on the findings to ensure consistency and fairness.

To ensure the integrity of the internal quality assurance process, Internal Quality Assurers (IQAs) must not quality assure work that they have assessed.

Assessors must ensure fair assessment and equality of opportunity for the learner within the assessment process. In order to ensure that the assessor is making judgements that are consistent with the rest of the assessment team, they must meet regularly with other assessors and internal quality assurers to discuss assessment decisions.

4.2 Sampling

Sampling is a key element of the internal quality assurance process whereby the IQA:

- uses a risk-based approach to determine what to sample and when
- checks the quality and consistency of each assessor's decisions
- maintains a common standard of marking within the centre over time
- applies methods like vertical sampling (same unit across assessors), horizontal sampling (multiple units from one learner), and diagonal sampling (across units and learners)
- ensures sampling covers all units over time, not just at the end of the assessment process

4.3 Internal standardisation

Internal standardisation is a collaborative process by which tutors and assessors within a centre consider work that they have assessed and, using pre-determined criteria, reach a common agreement on standards as being typical of work at a particular level or grade by comparing samples and providing peer evaluation.

The process of internal quality assurance provides an opportunity for assessors to receive feedback and support, which can help improve their assessment skills. It fosters a culture of continuous improvement and professional development among teaching and assessment staff.

Standardisation will be facilitated by the Centre's IQA and should include all those involved in assessing learner evidence. Centre standardisation events should be held at regular intervals. Centres will be required to keep records of each internal standardisation event, including the date, attendees and notes on any outcomes and actions. Centres will be required to store these records securely for three years, and Gateway Qualifications may ask to see them as part of the centre's quality assurance and monitoring activities.

4.4 External quality assurance

The external quality assurance process for this qualification takes a risk-based approach where external monitoring visits are carried out to review the internal quality systems of centres against key quality standards.

External quality assurance falls into two categories, the first being the quality assurance of the centre's policies and procedures (Centre monitoring) as detailed below, with the second being external sampling of the assessment decisions at qualification level.

4.5 Centre monitoring

Centre monitoring is undertaken by an External Quality Assurer (EQA) allocated to the centre. The EQA plays a critical role in the Gateway Qualifications approach to centre assessment standards scrutiny as they are responsible for:

- validating the centre's procedures for delivery of qualifications and assessment
- completing reports for each visit with clear action points where needed
- carrying out an annual compliance visit
- risk rating centres on the above

The EQA will carry out an initial risk assessment at the centre recognition stage and then annually on an ongoing basis and will give a high/medium/low-risk.

The EQA will arrange the annual quality monitoring visits. These visits:

- monitor the centre's compliance with the centre recognition terms and conditions by reviewing programme documentation and meeting managers and centre staff
- identify any staff development needs
- ensure that all procedures are being complied with through an audit trail, and make sure that the award of certificates of achievement to learners is secure

The EQA will contact the centre in advance of a visit. However, Gateway Qualifications reserves the right to undertake unannounced visits, including during assessment times.

4.6 Quality assuring centre assessment decisions

The external quality assurance process for this qualification involves a risk-based approach where sampling of assessment decisions and internal quality assurance activity to ensure that qualification standards are maintained.

An External Quality Assurer (EQA) will be allocated to the centre to sample the centre's assessment decisions, who will consider whether the sample provides evidence of the following:

- that the standard set out in the units is evidenced and assessment decisions are applied consistently
- appropriate teaching, stimulus, support, or learning materials and resources
- an appropriate internal quality assurance strategy and sampling plans
- appropriate and consistent feedback provided by the assessor to the learner, and by the IQA to the assessor

A report will be completed by the EQA and made available to the Centres once the sampling activity has been completed.

4.7 Malpractice and maladministration

Malpractice is any deliberate activity, neglect, default or other practice that compromises the integrity of the assessment process and/or the validity of certificates. It covers any deliberate actions, neglect, default or other practice that compromises or could compromise:

- the assessment process
- the integrity of a regulated qualification
- the validity of a result or certificate
- the reputation and credibility of Gateway Qualifications
- the qualification to the public at large

Centre staff should be familiar with the Malpractice and Maladministration Policy and Procedure.

4.8 Direct claim status

Direct claim status (DCS) is a status given to centres on an individual qualification basis and allows centres to claim certification without waiting for an external quality assurance activity to take place.

DCS is permitted for this qualification. Refer to the Direct Claims Status page for further details.

4.9 Recognition of prior learning

Recognition of Prior Learning enables recognition of achievement from a range of activities through the knowledge, understanding or skills that learners already possess and so do not need to develop these through a course of learning.

The use of RPL is not permitted for this qualification.

4.10 Reasonable adjustments and special considerations

The following are reasonable adjustments that require permission from Gateway Qualifications prior to assessment.

- adapting assessment materials
- adaptation of the physical environment for access purposes
- adaptation to equipment
- assessment material in an enlarged format or Braille
- assessment material on coloured paper or in audio format
- use of British Sign Language (BSL)
- changing usual assessment arrangements
- extra time, e.g. assignment extensions
- reader
- scribe
- use of assistive software
- use of assistive technology
- use of coloured overlays, low vision aids
- use of a different assessment location

If not specifically listed in this section, reasonable adjustments are centre permitted, for details on this Centres should refer to the Reasonable Adjustments and Special Considerations Centre Guidance

For learners who require special consideration at the point of assessment, complete a Special Consideration Request Form.

4.11 Appeals

Learners who wish to appeal about their assessment results or a decision affecting their learning should either be supported by their Centre or should have exhausted their Centre's own appeals process before appealing to Gateway Qualifications. In the latter case, learners must provide Gateway Qualifications with evidence that they have first appealed to their Centre.

Centres and learners should refer to the Appeals policy for further information.

5. Glossary of terms

This section provides a concise compilation of frequently used terms and acronyms within our organisation and the broader educational context.

Term	Definition
Assessment Criteria (AC)	The standard a learner is expected to meet to demonstrate that learning outcomes have been met.
Guided Learning Hours (GLH)	The number of hours associated to a qualification/unit relating to the activity of a learner in being taught or instructed by – or otherwise participating in education or training under the immediate guidance or supervision of – a lecturer, supervisor, tutor or other appropriate provider of education or training.
Learning Outcomes (LO)	Describes what a learner is expected to know, understand and be able to do as a result of the process of learning.
Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL)	A method of assessment that considers whether a learner can meet the assessment requirements for a unit through knowledge, understanding or skills they already possess and do not need to develop through a course of learning.
Total Qualification Time (TQT)	Is the number of notional hours which represents an estimate of the total amount of time that could be reasonably expected to be required for a Learner to achieve and demonstrate the achievement of the level of attainment necessary for the award of the qualification.

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