April 1, 2026 *(Revised 4/17/2026)*

Elena Quiroz-Livanis
Interim Secretary of Higher Education
Maryland Higher Education Commission
217 E. Redwood Street, Suite 2100
Baltimore, MD 21202

Dear Dr. Quiroz-Livanis,

The Maryland Institute College of Art (MICA) is pleased to submit the attached new program proposal for review to the Maryland Higher Education Commission:

- New Academic Program: Master of Professional Studies in Game Design

The Letter of Intent for the MPS in Game Design was submitted on October 1, 2025 and response received on December 1, 2025. The final proposal addresses all questions raised in the response. If you need additional information, please contact Raymond Barclay, Senior Vice President of Enrollment Strategy, Innovation, and Partnerships (rbarclay@mica.edu).

Thank you for the opportunity to submit our new program proposal letter for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Cecilia M. McCormick, J.D.
President

Dr. Raymond Barclay
Vice President of Enrollment Strategy, Innovation, and Partnerships

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Cover Sheet for In-State Institutions
New Program or Substantial Modification to Existing Program

Institution Submitting Proposal	Maryland Institute College of Art (MICA)

Each action below requires a separate proposal and cover sheet.

- (•) New Academic Program
- ( ) New Area of Concentration
- ( ) New Degree Level Approval
- ( ) New Stand-Alone Certificate
- ( ) Off Campus Program
- ( ) Substantial Change to a Degree Program
- ( ) Substantial Change to an Area of Concentration
- ( ) Substantial Change to a Certificate Program
- ( ) Cooperative Degree Program
- ( ) Offer Program at Regional Higher Education Center

Payment Submitted: (•) Yes ( ) No Payment Type: ( ) R*STARS # (•) Check # Payment Amount: $850 Date Submitted: 04/01/20

Department Proposing Program	School of Creative and Professional Studies	
Degree Level and Degree Type	Master of Professional Studies (MPS)	
Title of Proposed Program	Master of Professional Studies in Game Design	
Total Number of Credits	30	
Suggested Codes	HEGIS: 1099.00	CIP: 50.0411
Program Modality	( ) On-campus (•) Distance Education (fully online) ( ) Both	
Program Resources	(•) Using Existing Resources ( ) Requiring New Resources	
Projected Implementation Date (must be 60 days from proposal submisison as per COMAR 13B.02.03.03)	(•) Fall ( ) Spring ( ) Summer	Year: 2026
Provide Link to Most Recent Academic Catalog	URL: https://www.mica.edu/academic-catalog/	
Preferred Contact for this Proposal	Name: Raymond D. Barclay, MS, PhD Title: Senior Vice President of Enrollment Strategy, Innovation, and Partnerships Phone: (410) 225-2293 Email: rbarclay@mica.edu	
President/Chief Executive	Type Name: Cecilia M. McCormick, J.D. Signature: Cecilia M. McCormick, J.D. Date: 04/01/2026	
	Date of Approval/Endorsement by Governing Board: 03/11/2026	

Revision Date: 04/17/2026

MHEC Academic Program Proposal

A. Centrality to Institutional Mission and Planning Priorities:

1. **Provide a description of the program, including each area of concentration (if applicable), and how it relates to the institution's approved mission.**

Master of Professional Studies in Game Design (MPS) Program Description

The Master of Professional Studies (MPS) in Game Design is a 30-credit, fully online graduate degree that prepares emerging creative professionals to design, prototype, and launch innovative games across platforms and genres. Delivered through a flexible asynchronous format, the program integrates artistic vision, interactive systems design, gamification, leadership, and production management to equip graduates with the expertise to thrive in today's global game and interactive media industries.

Students engage in a highly applied curriculum emphasizing iterative design, critical play theory, collaborative production pipelines, and cross-disciplinary communication. The program combines the creative rigor of MICA's art and design tradition with advanced industry practices, including agile project management, procedural generation, and sustainability in digital production. Graduates emerge with both a playable professional-quality prototype and a portfolio of design documentation demonstrating their readiness for roles in design, development, and creative direction.

Learning Philosophy and Goals

The MPS in Game Design balances creative expression with technical and managerial competency. Its graduate-level focus cultivates not only the skills required to produce engaging and commercially viable games but also the critical literacy to understand play as a cultural, social, and aesthetic phenomenon. Students are encouraged to see themselves as designers, artists, and strategists who can shape the future of interactive storytelling and digital experience.

Career Pathways

Graduates of the MPS in Game Design are prepared for a broad range of roles across the game, entertainment, simulation, and educational technology sectors. Possible career paths include:

- Game Designer / Systems Designer
- Level Designer or Interaction Architect
- Producer or Product Manager
- Art Director or Technical Artist
- UX Designer for Interactive Media
- Indie Game Developer or Studio Founder
- Educator or Researcher in Game Studies
- Instructional Designer
- Corporate Trainer

By emphasizing both creative authorship and leadership, the program cultivates professionals capable of shaping not just games, but the evolving language of interactive experience design.

Addressing issues raised in the response to the Letter of Intent regarding Career Pathways

In **Sections B & C** of this proposal, we address the main concerns raised by the December 1, 2025 response to our Letter of Intent. Here is a brief summary:

1. Whether the program aligns with high-growth occupations as identified on the Workforce Needs Analysis:
    - We note that the Needs Analysis does not have sufficient granular detail to show the potential of the game design field, because the game design industry draws from multiple disciplines
    - We provide evidence from our own feasibility study, O'Net and other reliable sources to show that there is increasing demand that is higher than average for game design professionals and that the industry itself is rapidly expanding.
2. Why a Master's degree is needed and the reasons why the specific requirements for employment and career advancement differentiate Master's level graduates from Bachelor's degree holders:
    - We note that our feasibility study documented that 13 – 15% of openings for game design professionals require a Master's degree.
    - We note that breaking into the industry is competitive and the advantage that an advanced level degree and resulting portfolio gives to a graduate is significant.
    - We note that the MPS degree adds 2 – 3 years more experience which allows a graduate to meet the threshold required of 24% of job postings for game designers.
    - Finally, we note that our curriculum design allows a graduate to specialize in a track specifically designed for industry production roles, which would not be possible with an undergraduate degree.

Distinctive Program Features

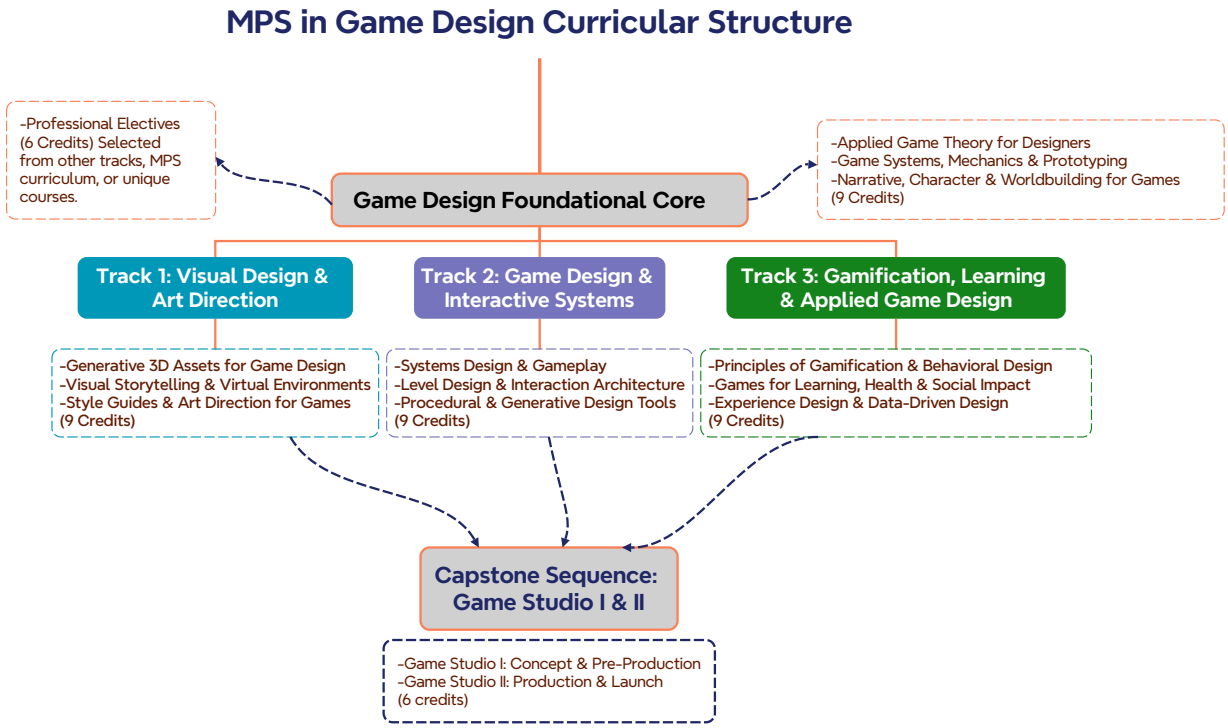
- Fully Asynchronous Learning: Designed for working professionals balancing creative practice with career advancement.
- Studio-Based Capstone: A complete production pipeline experience from concept to playable prototype.
- Specialization Tracks: Focused professional identity within Visual Design, Systems Design, or Gamification.
- Industry Integration: Optional residency, mentorship, and alignment with global conference networks.
- Cross-Disciplinary Collaboration: Students work in diverse teams simulating real studio environments.
- Portfolio-Driven Outcomes: Every course contributes to a tangible body of professional work

Curriculum Structure

The program is organized into four categories:

Category	Credits	Description
Foundations	9	Core theory and skills in play, systems, and storytelling
Track Specialization	9	Three courses plus one studio within a focused area
Professional Electives	6	Short modules or a Game Industry Residency
Capstone Sequence	6	Two courses culminating in a playable prototype
Total	30 credits	

Each 8-week asynchronous course is designed for working professionals, with projects that build cumulatively toward the capstone. The flexible, asynchronous format supports collaboration across time zones and professional contexts while maintaining rigorous academic and creative standards.



Foundational Core (9 Credits)

All students begin with a shared foundation emphasizing the principles of play, mechanics, and narrative.

Track Specializations (9 Credits)

Students select one of three specialization tracks, each culminating in a project-based studio.

Track 1: Visual Design & Art Direction

For artists, illustrators, and environment designers focusing on visual storytelling, 3D asset creation, and style direction.

Courses:

- Generative 3D Assets for Game Design
- Visual Storytelling & Virtual Environments
- Style Guides & Art Direction for Games

Career Paths: Art Director, Technical Artist, Environment Artist, UI/UX Designer

Track 2: Game Design & Interactive Systems

For designers interested in mechanics, interactivity, and emergent gameplay.

Courses:

- Systems Design & Gameplay
- Level Design & Interaction Architecture
- Procedural & Generative Design Tools

Career Paths: Gameplay Designer, Systems Designer, Interaction Architect

Track 3: Gamification, Learning & Applied Game Design

For educators, UX professionals, and experienced designers exploring how game mechanics motivate engagement and learning beyond entertainment.

Courses:

- Principles of Gamification & Behavioral Design
- Game Design for Learning, Health & Social Impact
- Experience Design & Data-Driven Interactions

Career Paths: Learning Experience Designer, Gamification Strategist, Serious Game Designer, Educational Technology Innovator, Experience Design Consultant

Professional Electives (6 Credits)

Students may customize their education by taking several 1-credit micro-courses, an optional Game Industry Residency, or a concurrently running course from another MPS degree. Electives rotate annually and respond to evolving technologies and professional trends. The Game Industry Residency & Conference option allows students to attend a major event such as GDC or IndieCade, conduct field research, and develop professional networks.

Capstone Sequence: Game Studio I & II (6 Credits)

The program culminates in a two-part capstone simulating professional production.

- Game Studio I: Concept & Pre-Production — students propose, research, and document an original game concept through a formal Game Design Document (GDD) and early prototype.

- Game Studio II: Production & Launch — students complete development, conduct usability testing, and prepare a professional presentation of a playable prototype.

Each project is reviewed by faculty and industry mentors, ensuring professional standards and readiness for real-world application. The final portfolio demonstrates artistic, technical, and managerial competence.

How the MPS in Game Design relates to the institution's approved mission

The Master of Professional Studies Learning Environment

The Master of Professional Studies (MPS) suite at the Maryland Institute College of Art (MICA) represents an integrated ecosystem of graduate programs designed for creative professionals leading at the intersection of art, design, technology, strategy, and education. Collectively, the MPS degrees in Game Design, Product Management, Business for Creatives, Data Analytics & Visualization, and User Experience Design form a unified professional learning environment where students gain both disciplinary expertise and cross-disciplinary fluency—skills that prepare them to lead, innovate, and create immediate impact in diverse professional contexts.

The MPS learning environment is built on MICA's tradition of studio-based, project-driven education, extended through a digital-first, flexible, and collaborative model. Each program blends asynchronous online coursework with applied virtual studio experiences, mentorship, and industry engagement, creating an adaptive framework that supports working professionals and entrepreneurial practitioners alike.

A Shared Framework of Essential Skills and Bodies of Knowledge

While each MPS program develops specialized knowledge in its domain, all share a common foundation of professional competencies and program format that ensure graduates are equipped to lead and collaborate in complex, interdisciplinary environments.

Creative Entrepreneurship

Students learn to envision, design, and launch creative ventures—from independent studios and digital products to social-impact initiatives and scalable enterprises. The curriculum emphasizes market awareness, innovation strategy, business modeling, and venture development rooted in creative thinking.

Strategic Leadership

Through coursework in organizational strategy, communication, and project direction, students develop the leadership skills to manage teams, guide creative processes, and align diverse collaborators toward shared goals. Ethical decision-making and inclusive leadership practices are emphasized throughout.

Strategic Communications & Stakeholder Collaboration

Every MPS program cultivates the ability to communicate complex ideas with clarity and persuasion. Students gain proficiency in professional storytelling, visual communication, and stakeholder alignment—skills essential for client engagement, cross-disciplinary collaboration, and organizational influence.

Agile & Cross-Disciplinary Management

Students employ Agile methodologies and design-thinking frameworks to manage creative projects from concept to delivery. Whether developing a game prototype, digital product, or exhibition experience, they learn iterative testing, sprint planning, and adaptive leadership in dynamic, interdisciplinary settings.

Sustainable & Ethical Systems Design

Each MPS program integrates sustainability as both an ethical commitment and an innovation strategy. Students evaluate environmental, social, and economic impacts across design and production systems, advancing circular, regenerative, and responsible approaches to creative practice and business development.

Visual & Technical Art, Design & Development

Across all MPS degrees, students strengthen visual literacy and technical fluency—building portfolios that merge aesthetics with functionality. Coursework includes digital design, motion graphics, interactive media, 3D visualization, and prototype development, aligning creative expression with industry-standard tools and workflows.

Portfolio Development & Ready-to-Implement Capstones

Every MPS culminates in a two-course Capstone Studio sequence where students integrate research, design, and strategy to produce deliverables that can be immediately applied in professional settings. Capstones may take the form of fully developed games, product prototypes, data visualizations, UX systems, startup business plans, or educational experiences—each demonstrating creative leadership and tangible real-world value.

Data & AI-Driven Innovation

The MPS learning environment embraces data literacy and generative intelligence as essential creative tools. Students learn to use data visualization, analytics, and AI-assisted design for research, product optimization, and user personalization, positioning them to lead in industries shaped by automation and intelligent systems.

Education, Training & Research

Reflecting MICA's commitment to lifelong learning and creative research, students engage in inquiry-driven projects that blend design and applied research. In the case of several MPS degrees that develop design skills for development and training, graduates emerge prepared not only to lead within their professions but also to design curricula, workshops, and learning systems based on human-centered design thinking.

An Integrated Ecosystem for Professional Growth

Students and faculty across MPS programs engage in shared seminars, electives, and collaborative projects that reflect the interdisciplinary nature of contemporary creative work. Through co-curricular workshops and joint capstone showcases, learners exchange expertise across domains—combining artistry with analytics, business with design, and theory with implementation.

This integrated structure cultivates a professional learning environment that mirrors the collaborative ecosystems of real-world innovation—where data scientists work with designers, educators with technologists, and creative leaders with strategists.

Graduates emerge as creative innovators, system thinkers, and applied researchers prepared to lead in industries that increasingly demand interdisciplinary fluency, ethical intelligence, and creative vision.

The MPS in Game Design, which combines a common core, specialized skill development tracks linked to career options, and a capstone portfolio, opens up opportunities for game designers, instructional designers, teachers, and corporate trainers to improve their employability and improve the quality of their professional contributions to their work.

Specific Alignment with MICA's Mission

The program draws on MICA's strengths in fine arts, graphic, applied design, media and film arts, sound design, museum studies, art education, and humanities fields such as sociology, psychology, anthropology, art history, and history. The program design addresses key elements of MICA's Next Century Academic Vision, including Prototyping and Innovation Technologies, Pathways, Arts and Sciences integration, Social Impact and Creative Entrepreneurship.

The program fully embodies MICA's mission to ***empower students to forge creative, purposeful lives and careers in a diverse and changing world; thrive with Baltimore; and make the world we imagine***. The program situates game design as both an artistic and social practice—an evolving medium through which creativity, collaboration, and critical inquiry intersect to address real-world challenges and opportunities.

This program will advance the mission of MICA by adding to the diversity of rewarding careers that students may prepare for and consequently offer graduates access to a new opportunity for prosperity. Due to the online delivery of this graduate-level study and remote opportunities available in the game design industry, there is the potential for MICA to extend its impact beyond the Baltimore region.

Empowering Creative, Purposeful Lives

At its core, the MPS in Game Design empowers students to become creators and leaders who understand games not only as entertainment but as expressive systems of meaning and agency**.** Through courses in play theory, systems thinking, and interactive narrative, students learn to connect aesthetic vision with purposeful design—to craft experiences that engage, teach, heal, and inspire. The program's flexible, fully online format extends access to diverse learners worldwide, providing working professionals, artists, educators, and technologists with a pathway to creative advancement without geographic or economic barriers. This commitment to accessibility directly supports MICA's mission to prepare students for creative, purposeful careers in an increasingly global and digital society.

Thriving with Baltimore and Beyond

While globally accessible, the program remains rooted in MICA's values of community and place. Students are supported in viewing games as tools for social connection, urban storytelling, and civic imagination**—**appr**o**aches that reflect Baltimore's legacy of resilience, innovation, and creative entrepreneurship. Opportunities for applied gamification and social impact design invite students to partner with communities and organizations to address challenges through interactive media, aligning with MICA's vision of "Thriving with Baltimore" as a model for local engagement with global relevance.

Making the World We Imagine

Game design is inherently worldbuilding—the art of making imagined spaces real through design and participation. The MPS in Game Design channels that creative capacity toward the collective act of "making the world we imagine." Whether through entertainment, education, or social innovation, graduates use interactive systems to model empathy, ethics, and sustainability. By fostering experimentation and reflection, the program empowers students to envision alternate futures and to use design as a medium for change.

Tenets in Action

- **We assert the centrality of artists, designers, and educators in society:** The program positions game designers as cultural producers and educators who influence perception, communication, and participation across media.
- **We shape culture:** Students learn to create meaningful play experiences that reflect and transform cultural narratives.
- **We flourish through collaboration:** Every studio course reinforces interdisciplinary teamwork, mirroring the collaborative ecosystems of creative industries.
- **We embrace differences:** The asynchronous format and global accessibility promote a learning community grounded in inclusion and diverse perspectives.
- **We invent through thoughtful disruption:** Students use games to challenge norms, spark dialogue, and reimagine engagement.
- **We strive for excellence and rigor:** The curriculum demands professional-level design execution and critical reflection at every stage.
- **We model a community of care and pride in resilience:** Supportive mentorship and peer critique foster a culture of care, adaptability, and perseverance—values at the heart of MICA.
- **We exemplify passion, conviction, and fun:** The study of play reminds students that creativity flourishes through joy and curiosity, reaffirming that play itself is a serious and vital form of human expression.

In essence, the **MPS in Game Design** transforms MICA's mission and tenets into practice. It equips artists and designers not only to succeed in creative industries but to shape culture with purpose, imagination, and care.

2. **Explain how the proposed program supports the institution's strategic goals and provide evidence that affirms it is an institutional priority.**

Crucial to the program's success, and the advancement of MICA's planning priorities, is the development of new industry partnerships and the expansion of integrative learning strategies that provide high impact learning experiences mimicking real-world opportunities in a low-stakes environment. Equally critical is the college's continuing commitment to alumni career success and ROI while deploying new strategies for lowering the cost of advanced study. The MPS in Game Design will help achieve these goals through a tuition model that is more flexible than in MICA's residential college thereby lowering barriers to access and offering shorter pathways to complete the degree.

The proposed MPS in Game Design aligns with MICA's strategic goals by fostering interdisciplinary collaboration, enhancing student flexibility, and responding to evolving industry needs. It supports MICA's commitment to innovation in art and design education and prepares students for diverse career paths in a rapidly changing creative landscape.

MICA's program recognizes that contemporary games are not only entertainment products but also expressive, cultural, and educational experiences that expand the possibilities of visual communication, storytelling, and interaction.

Preparational Emphasis

The program's preparational emphasis is applied, interdisciplinary, and production-focused; combining art and design foundations with technical fluency and leadership development.
It prepares students to function effectively in collaborative, distributed, and technologically complex creative environments, reflecting contemporary industry practice.

Key areas of emphasis include:

- Design Thinking and Systems Literacy: Students learn to approach games as dynamic systems, integrating mechanics, aesthetics, and narrative into cohesive player experiences.

- Technical Proficiency: Courses in prototyping, 2D/3D asset creation, procedural design, and interaction architecture develop strong command of digital production tools and workflows.

- Collaborative Leadership: Through project-based studios and capstone courses, students practice agile management, creative communication, and cross-disciplinary collaboration in team settings.

- Critical and Ethical Awareness: The curriculum foregrounds the ethical implications of representation, diversity, accessibility, and environmental sustainability in digital production.

- Portfolio and Professional Practice: Each course contributes to a comprehensive body of work culminating in a playable prototype and design documentation, positioning graduates for leadership or creative authorship roles.

This applied orientation differentiates the MPS from research or MFA programs by ensuring that graduates possess both creative vision and operational competence, preparing them to innovate within production environments or lead new ventures in interactive media.

Through a curriculum grounded in artistic inquiry, design research, and production practice, the program aims to:

- Advance creative authorship within the expanding discipline of interactive and immersive media.

- Promote ethical and inclusive design practices, ensuring that new voices, identities, and communities are represented in interactive storytelling.

- Bridge fine art, design, and digital production traditions—preparing creative professionals to lead in a rapidly evolving industry that now includes entertainment, education, healthcare, corporate training, online education, simulation, and cultural heritage sectors.

- Expand the field's understanding of games as cultural artifacts—objects of artistic merit, social commentary, and collective imagination.

In doing so, the program situates itself as a creative laboratory within MICA's mission to "advance art and design as forms of thinking, making, and social engagement." Graduates of the MPS in Game Design embody this mission by creating playable experiences that are intellectually rigorous, aesthetically

distinctive, and socially aware.

Evidence of institutional priority

Alignment with Institutional Learning Outcomes

At the institutional level, MICA graduates are expected to demonstrate creative excellence, critical thinking, ethical awareness, and collaborative engagement across diverse professional and cultural contexts. Within the MPS in Game Design, these ideals are operationalized through outcomes that apply to the creative, technical, and managerial processes of game development.

The MPS program's learning outcomes correlate directly to the institutional framework as follows:

1. **Critical and Cultural Analysis:**
   Students learn to analyze the structure and cultural role of games through theory, narrative, and worldbuilding—mirroring the institutional expectation that graduates understand their discipline's historical and societal context. This alignment underscores MICA's belief that artists and designers shape culture through critical engagement and reflective practice.
2. **Communication and Documentation:**
   The PLO on professional-level design documentation and communication supports the institutional goal of developing articulate, intentional practitioners capable of expressing complex ideas clearly. Game design's collaborative nature requires advanced communication skills to bridge creative, technical, and managerial roles—directly reinforcing MICA's emphasis on clarity and rigor.
3. **Professional Execution and Presentation, Iterative Making and Applied Creativity:**
   Producing functional prototypes through iterative processes reflects MICA's outcome that students synthesize ideas, experiment, and evaluate results through making. In both the institutional and programmatic frameworks, iteration is treated as an essential method of discovery and excellence. Delivering a final capstone prototype demonstrating design coherence and technical excellence embodies MICA's emphasis on professionalism, critical reflection, and excellence in creative practice. The capstone serves as both a learning assessment and a public demonstration of mastery consistent with institutional expectations for graduate-level accomplishment.
4. **Leadership and Collaboration:**
   Leading and managing cross-disciplinary creative teams exemplifies MICA's tenets of collaboration, care, and resilience. The PLO emphasizes agile teamwork, mirroring institutional outcomes that prioritize community, ethical action, and the ability to work effectively in complex, multicultural environments.
5. **Ethical and Market Awareness:**
   Applying market, ethical, and aesthetic considerations ensures that graduates integrate creative integrity with professional responsibility—reflecting MICA's commitment to ethical engagement, diversity, and social awareness.

Other evidence of meeting institutional priorities

The program has so far been developed through a collaborative process involving faculty from multiple sources, indicating broad institutional support including a majority of voter support in our faculty governance process and unanimous approval by the Board of Trustees.

It addresses the need for more flexible learning pathways, as highlighted in the recent SNAAP survey results from MICA alumni.

The initiative aligns with MICA's recent restructuring efforts and the creation of the Creative Experiential Learning (CEL) category, demonstrating a commitment to curricular innovation.

The program's focus on leveraging existing resources while creating new opportunities shows a strategic approach to program development in line with MICA's current financial considerations.

A goal of this new proposal is to address the demand in MICAs current prospective domestic and international student pools for more applied design programs that can be STEM designated as well as expand into new prospective student markets requiring more technical competencies — this will let us recruit from a broader market and not yet tapped pools of students.

The initiative aligns with MICA's ongoing efforts to revitalize existing programs and attract new students.

Reasons for adding the program:

- To offer a more flexible and adaptable learning pathway that reflects the evolving nature of the design field.
- To increase enrollment and visibility for smaller design programs and specializations, since they can feed into the game design program.
- To share more aspects of curriculum across more existing pathways.
- To respond to industry trends that increasingly value designers with broad, adaptable skill sets transferable to “applied” contexts and relevant for workforce development.
- To consolidate a cohort of similarly minded students, enabling peer-learning and an active studio culture.
- To provide more opportunities for creative experiential learning and professional development and partnerships.

3. **Provide a brief narrative of how the proposed program will be adequately funded for at least the first five years of program implementation. (Additional related information is required in section L.)**

MICA is fully committed to providing all of its programs with the administrative, financial, and technical support needed for the programs to fulfill their purpose. MICA is committed to supporting the success of this new program during its initial launch and through a period of five years as awareness of the program and enrollments build. If after five years, the program does not demonstrate the ability to be financially self-supporting, the College will implement changes to improve or sunset the program. Should the program be substantially modified or discontinued, curricular offerings will continue to be provided so that all enrolled students have the opportunity to obtain their degree within the normal period of time for completion.

Due to the asynchronous nature of the program, the primary investment in the program is not in physical facilities, rather it is in the content development for the online courses. The School for Creative and Professional Studies (SCPS) has an effective and efficient system for working with expert in the field and faculty to develop high quality online courses that create engaging and rigorous learning experiences for students. A plan is in place to build out the entire degree in our Learning Management System.

The SCPS has a marketing program with national impact using social media and dedicated recruitment based on sales leads. There is a decade of national-level success with MPS programs in User Interface Design, Data Analytics Visualization, and Business for Creatives that provide a foundation for the division to expand into additional graduate programs aligned with national trends and career opportunities.

Based on recruiting 3 cohorts a year ranging from 8 to 18 students in each, we estimate the MPS in Game Design will generate a surplus of $**$39,834** in the first year and **$1,679,164** by the fourth year.

Quick Facts

Program Name: MPS in Game Design

Version: 1.1

date: March, 2026

DATA SOURCE: Auto Populates

Enrollment	Year 1	Year 4	Steady State (added "net new" students)
	8	72	50

Student Breakdown	Year 1	Year 4
Part Time	0%	0%
Full Time	100%	100%
Average Annualized Credits/Student	30.00	30.00

Revenue	Year 1	Year 4
Net Tuition Revenue (NTR)	$514,046	$3,892,168
Revenue Factor	$29,042	$31,735

Tuition Discount Rate (applied in line 26)	Year 1	Year 4
	25%	25%

Total Direct Expense	Year 1	Year 4
	$224,482	$567,448

Program Surplus/Deficit (based on Full Cost Model)	Year 1	Year 4
Program surplus/deficit (Revenue - Total Direct Expenses)	$302,064	$3,324,720
Ratio of total revenue to Direct Expense	2.35	6.86
Program surplus/deficit (Revenue - Total Direct & University Expenses& Capital)	**$231,745**	**$3,234,813**

Amount above (below) standard contribution of 50% of margin	**$38,791**	**$1,378,636**

*Indirect Direct expenses include Marketing, Library, Capital

Breakeven Point	
With Direct and On-Going Launch Expenses	$657,355
With Full Overhead	$657,355

Capital Needs	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3
	0	0	0

4. **Provide a description of the institution's a commitment to:**

    a) ongoing administrative, financial, and technical support of the proposed program

    b) continuation of the program for a period of time sufficient to allow enrolled students to complete the program.

The MPS in Game Design will be supported by Enrollment Services and Graduate Admissions as all current MPS degrees are. In addition to cross-program staff there are staff members dedicated specifically to the success of this program, including an Executive Director of Professional Programs, Director of Professional Programs Administration, and two Instructional Designers.

Financial Planning: We have created a comprehensive profit and loss statement (P&L) using new templates developed by our Senior Vice President of Enrollment Strategy, Innovation, and Partnerships, Dr. Raymond Barclay and the Finance department (see below).

Business Plan: the P&L was informed by a comprehensive business plan to outline our strategy and goals inclusive of our enrollment horizon, expected program churn, and indirect and direct costs.

Initial Costs and Resource Utilization: The upfront costs for this program include the design and development of the courses and national marketing of the program

The program is fully online – a student will never be required to come to campus, consequently program investment is in creating engaging, informative, asynchronous courses that equip each student to meet the program outcomes. Using our existing development system, course authors will be selected from a mix of current and new adjunct and / or fulltime faculty, who will work with an instructional designer to deliver a high production value course.

No new facilities will be needed.

- Marketing: Strategic Communications is expanding its footprint by contracting with outside marketing firm specifically to promote SCPS programs.
- Increased enrollment revenue: Admissions anticipates that the new major will attract additional

students, generating increased tuition revenue to support the program.

- Grants and partnerships: We will actively pursue grants and industry partnerships to support specific initiatives within the program, such as new equipment or sponsored projects. We are also already collaborating with the new "Center for Creative Impact" to develop asynchronous workshops and courses that may be offered as some of the electives within the program
- Phased implementation: The program will be rolled out in phases, allowing for gradual investment and adjustment based on enrollment and resource needs. A rollout chart with student enrollment projections is included. For the first semester the program is offered, only the first two courses need to be created, so the course development will phase in until all courses are created.

A detailed budget projection is included outlining expected costs and revenue sources to ensure the program's financial sustainability is directly linked to the business plan in other sections of the full proposal will be forthcoming

Administrative support will be provided through existing channels within Enrollment Services, and will integrate the new program into the existing MPS academic structure. Financial support will be allocated from the current budgets, with the potential for reallocation of resources from under-enrolled programs to support this initiative.

We will commit to the continuation of the MPS in Game Design major for a period sufficient to allow enrolled students to complete the program. MICA can ensure that:

1. All enrolled students will have the opportunity to complete their degree within a reasonable timeframe.

2. Alternative course options can be provided if specific required courses are unavailable.

3. Faculty from related design disciplines will be available to support students through the completion of their studies.

4. Academic advising may need enhancement to guide students through any necessary program adjustments.

B. Critical and Compelling Regional or Statewide Need as Identified in the State Plan:

1. Demonstrate demand and need for the program in terms of meeting present and future needs of the region and the State in general based on one or more of the following:

a) The need for the advancement and evolution of knowledge

b) Societal needs, including expanding educational opportunities and choices for minority and educationally disadvantaged students at institutions of higher education

c) The need to strengthen and expand the capacity of historically black institutions to provide high quality and unique educational programs

2. Provide evidence that the perceived need is consistent with the Maryland State Plan for Postsecondary Education.

The need for the advancement and evolution of knowledge

Intended Contribution to the Field of Art and Design

The MPS in Game Design contributes to the field of art and design by positioning game creation as a critical, interdisciplinary art form that integrates aesthetic innovation, narrative design, systems thinking, and technological literacy. MICA's program recognizes that contemporary games are not only entertainment products but also expressive, cultural, and educational experiences that expand the possibilities of visual communication, storytelling, and interaction.

Through a curriculum grounded in artistic inquiry, design research, and production practice, the program aims to:

- Advance creative authorship within the expanding discipline of interactive and immersive media.
- Promote ethical and inclusive design practices, ensuring that new voices, identities, and communities are represented in interactive storytelling.
- Bridge fine art, design, and digital production traditions—preparing creative professionals to lead in a rapidly evolving industry that now includes entertainment, education, healthcare, corporate training, online education, simulation, and cultural heritage sectors.
- Expand the field's understanding of games as cultural artifacts—objects of artistic merit, social commentary, and collective imagination.

In doing so, the program situates itself as a creative laboratory within MICA's mission to "advance art and design as forms of thinking, making, and social engagement." Graduates of the MPS in Game Design embody this mission by creating playable experiences that are intellectually rigorous, aesthetically distinctive, and socially aware.

Societal needs, including expanding educational opportunities and choices for minority and educationally disadvantaged students at institutions of higher education

Intended Audience

The program is designed for mid-career and emerging creative professionals who wish to expand their practice into interactive media, game design, and experiential storytelling.
It attracts individuals with prior experience in fields such as:

- Visual art, illustration, animation, or digital media
- Graphic or experience design
- Creative writing and narrative design
- Product design or digital fabrication
- Software development or interactive technology
- Teaching and creative education

- Corporate training
- Instructional design for online learning

Because the MPS is a professional graduate degree, it emphasizes applied learning and immediate career relevance. The fully online, asynchronous format allows students to pursue graduate study while maintaining a professional or creative practice, making it especially appealing to working artists, designers, educators, trainers, and developers seeking career advancement, transition, or specialization in interactive design.

Typical student profiles include:

- A professional artist or designer seeking to integrate interactivity and game mechanics into their creative portfolio.
- A media producer or developer transitioning into creative direction, narrative design, or product management.
- A K–12 or higher education instructor expanding curriculum into game-based learning or interactive arts or using gamification as a teaching strategy.
- An entrepreneur developing independent or small-studio game projects with artistic and cultural focus.
- A corporate trainer developing engaging and inspirational courses for employees
- An instructional designer building compelling online course content to motivate learners in a virtual environment

Maryland State Plan for Education Correlation

State Goal 1: Student Access: Ensure equitable access to affordable and quality postsecondary education for all Maryland residents.

State Priority 1 - Affordability of postsecondary education in Maryland.

- **Strategy 1A: Provide Financial Aid and Support:**
    - MICA's ability to integrate need-based financial aid into the program supports the State Plan's emphasis on affordability and reducing barriers to postsecondary education.

State Priority 2 - Improve financial literacy programs for students and families to encourage financial planning to pay for postsecondary education.

- **Strategy 1B – Continue to offer information and workshops to assist students and families to plan for higher education.**
    - MICA offers extensive remote and in-person opportunities for parents and students to attend financial aid workshops, as well as provide advising for financial planning as well.

- Collaboration with Baltimore City schools introduces financial planning for higher education at multiple points in a student's secondary studies.

State Priority 3 – Improve systems that inform and evaluate a student's academic readiness for postsecondary education.

- **Strategy 1C: Improve college readiness through partnerships with K-12.**
    - Collaboration with Baltimore City schools introduces the popular entertainment platform of game design as a viable career path for underrepresented students.
- **Strategy 1D:** Provide comprehensive support for student success.
    - Mentorships, internships, and partnerships with local game-related industries contribute to students' academic and career achievements.

State Priority 4 - Specific student populations access affordable and high-quality postsecondary education.

- **Strategy 1E: Ensure equitable access for all Marylanders.**
    - The program's emphasis on increasing diversity in game design aligns with this strategy by addressing racial and socioeconomic disparities in access to creative education.
    - While the player base for games is diverse and global, the workforce is disproportionately white and leadership is even less diverse. This gap creates a clear opportunity for the MPS in Game Design to:
        - Build inclusive pipelines into game development
        - Position students to address representation through design
        - Connect community voices → game systems → cultural narratives
        - Align with equity, workforce development, and civic innovation goals

- **Strategy 1F: Increase Opportunities for Underrepresented/Underserved Populations:**

- The MPS in Game Design program at MICA, with targeted scholarships, mentorships, bridge programming, and outreach initiatives, addresses systemic inequities in higher education by increasing access in the creative fields.

- Partnerships with Baltimore City Public Schools and local organizations will introduce underserved students to design disciplines early, fostering a pipeline to higher education and high demand or emerging STEAM-related fields.

- As a place-based organization that has a strong and long-standing commitment to Baltimore, the program ensures accessibility for local public/charter high school graduates who may not otherwise have exposure to design education.

State Goal 2: Student Success: Promote and implement practices and policies that will ensure student success.

State Priority 5: Maintain the commitment to high-quality postsecondary education in Maryland.

- **Strategy 2A – Design and deliver an effective curriculum uniquely suitable for teaching advanced knowledge and skills in game design.**

    - Construct high production value and effective asynchronous curriculum delivery that meets Quality Matter's standards.

    - Employ active game design professionals with advanced experience and specialized skills as faculty.

    - Use annual course revision cycle to maintain state-of-the-industry content in the classrooms.

- **Strategy 2B: Align with Workforce Needs:**

    - The program's focus on high-demand fields that are part of the game design production process, such as user-experience, graphic design, 3D modeling, coding, technologies/applications related to building information modeling, virtual environmental design, and product development, directly supports Maryland's innovation economy.

    - Training game designers to integrate technology and user-centered approaches aligns with Maryland's emphasis on preparing students for STEM-related careers.

- Clear academic alignment with career tracks in the game design industry directly support workforce needs and create opportunities for students to transition into well-paying jobs.

- **Strategy 2C: Community and Economic Development:**

    - The program's projects, internships, and community engagement initiatives tie into the State Plan's goal to foster economic growth through higher education. MICA graduates will contribute to Baltimore's revitalization and Maryland's broader creative economy.

    - For example, by integrating Baltimore-specific datasets, students can:

        - Build serious games using real demographic, environmental, and economic data

        - Translate data into interactive narratives and decision-making scenarios

        - Explore "what-if" futures (e.g., policy changes, climate impacts)

State Priority 6: Support timely completion of an academic program.

- **Strategy 2D: Apply a Career-Focused Curriculum:**

    - The MPS in Game Design program aligns with the State Plan's priority to increase postsecondary completion rates by offering clear career pathways to the multiple roles on game design production teams.

        Visual Design & Art Direction Track

        - This track is useful for artists, illustrators, animators, and visual designers who want to develop the specialized skills needed to lead the visual production of games — from concept art and environmental worldbuilding to art direction and production management.

        Sample career pathways:
        - Art Director or Visual Director
        - Technical Artist or Environment Artist
        - 3D Asset Specialist or Character Designer
        - UI/UX Designer for Interactive Media
        - Concept Artist or Visual Development Lead

Game Design & Interactive Systems Track

- This track is designed for designers, developers, and technically minded creatives who want to master the craft of gameplay design — building the mechanics, levels, and systems that create compelling player experiences.

Sample career pathways:
- Game Designer or Systems Designer
- Level Designer or Interaction Architect
- Narrative Designer or Gameplay Programmer
- Procedural Systems Designer
- Independent or Indie Game Developer

Gamification, Learning & Applied Game Design Track

- This track is designed for educators, instructional designers, UX professionals, corporate trainers, and creative technologists who want to apply game design principles to learning, behavior change, and social impact.

Sample career pathways:
- Learning Experience Designer or Instructional Designer
- Gamification Strategist or Engagement Designer
- Serious Game Designer or Simulation Developer
- Educational Technology Innovator
- Corporate Trainer or Workforce Development Specialist

- **Strategy 2E: Hands-On Learning:**

    - Capstone projects and industry residencies, and collaboration with local businesses ensure that students gain practical, real-world experience, increasing their likelihood of degree completion and post-graduation employment.

- **Strategy 2F – Use a 3 – Semester year-round course schedule with multiple starts to shorten time from start to completion.**

    - With cohort starts and session in Fall, Spring and Summer, students are able to move quicker through the curriculum as compared to 2-semesters a year.

State Priority 7: Enhance the ways postsecondary education is a platform for ongoing lifelong learning.

- **Strategy 2G: Curricular focus on employer-desired skills and knowledge**
    - A focus on employer-desired technical, leadership and soft skills ensures that students see direct benefits from their education, motivating retention and completion.

- **Strategy 2H: Mentorship and Support Services:**
    - The integration of mentoring and professional development programs fosters academic success and prepares students for post-graduation careers in design-related fields.

- **Strategy 2I: Working professional compatible pace of study**
    - The MPS in Game Design features a course of study with 1-2 asynchronous courses taken during an 8-week term, which permits active professionals to fit study into their schedule.

Goal 3: Innovation: Foster innovation in all aspects of Maryland higher education to improve access and student success.

Priority 8: Promote a culture of risk-taking.

- **Strategy 3A: Apply Interdisciplinary Collaboration:**
    - By the very nature of the game design process, the MPS in Game Design program emphasizes cross-disciplinary problem-solving and teamwork. Capstone projects as a team effort led by each graduate candidate
    - By blending game design innovation, STEM, and applied design, the program reflects the State Plan's goal of fostering innovation in academic programs to meet workforce and industry innovation needs/demands. Game design requires technical skills in game engine use, sound design, 3 – D animation, and visual design.

- **Strategy 3B:** Expand opportunities for research and collaboration.
    - An MPS in Game Design can serve as a powerful interdisciplinary platform for addressing Baltimore's urban challenges by positioning games not just as entertainment, but as systems-thinking tools, civic simulations, and participatory design environments. For example, Game design inherently models systems, rules, feedback loops, and player behavior—all of which mirror urban environments.

        - Students can build simulation-based games that model:
        - Housing inequity and zoning policies
        - Transportation access and mobility deserts
        - Food systems and urban agriculture
        - Public health disparities
        - These simulations allow stakeholders to experiment with interventions safely, making invisible systems visible.

- **Strategy 3C:** Leverage partnerships to foster regional economic growth.
    - Partnerships with local businesses, nonprofits, and makerspaces create pathways for students to contribute to Maryland's economy, aligning directly with this strategy.
    - The emphasis of the program on the Capstone experience provides students with the opportunity to:
        - Partner with a **real Baltimore stakeholder** (city agency, nonprofit, community org)
        - Develop a **playable game or interactive system** addressing a specific urban challenge
            - Deliver both:
                - A **functional prototype**
                - A **research + impact report**

C. Quantifiable and Reliable Evidence and Documentation of Market Supply and Demand in the Region and State:

1. **Describe potential industry or industries, employment opportunities, and expected level of entry (*ex: mid-level management*) for graduates of the proposed program.**

Addressing Workforce Needs *(Relates to LOI question)*

The SOC Titles included in the Maryland Long Term Occupational Projections do not directly include video game design as an industry, so we need to look at related occupations such as Web and Digital

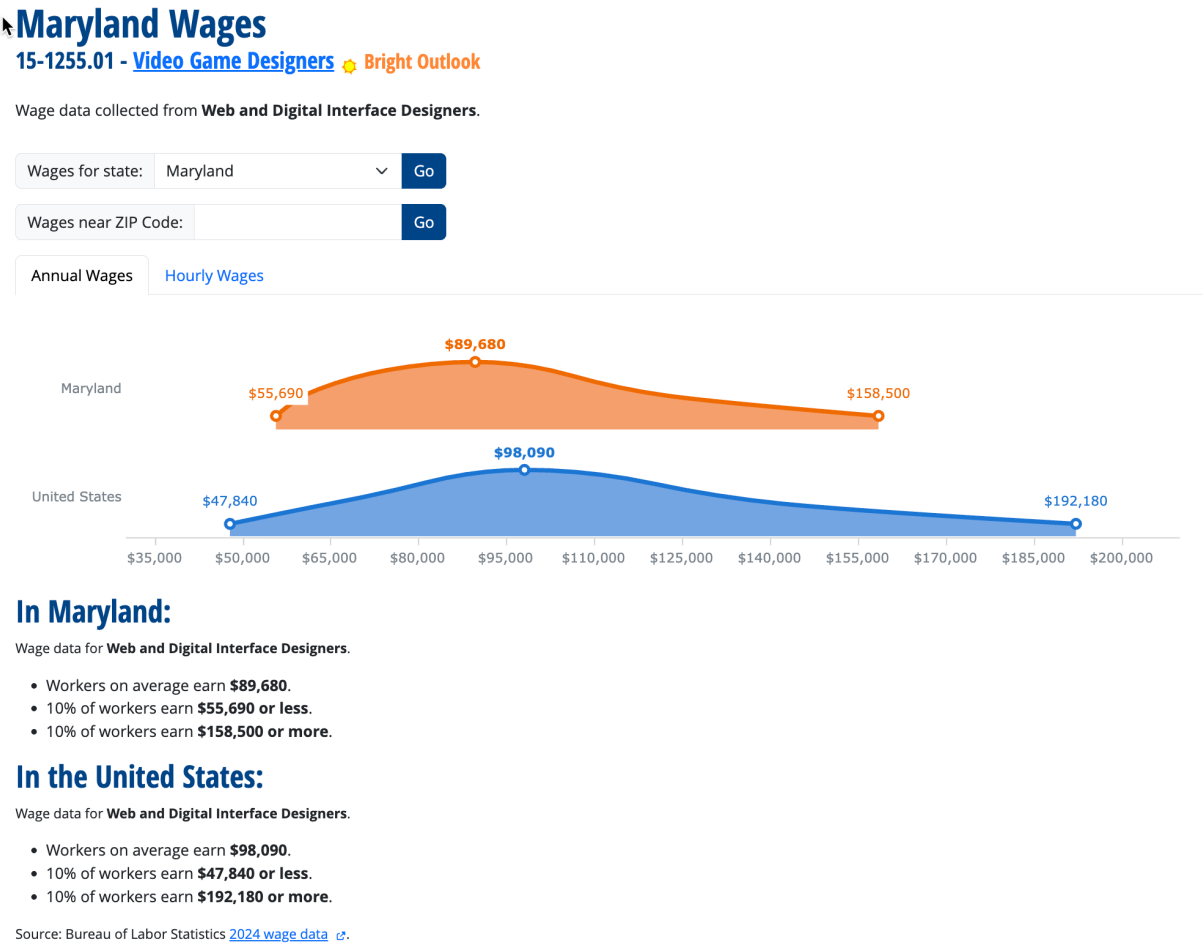
Interface Designers and others. The Game Design is an industry that employs script writers, animators, 3-D graphic artists, special effects artists, sound designers, editors, and producers. In the table below we see 6% to 9% growth across the related occupations. As we note further below, we can include data on the Training and Development field, because gamification is a key component of this industry.

Career Outlook in Maryland

SOC Title	SOC Level (group)	Base Employment	Projection Employment	Numeric Change	Percent Change	Replacement (exits /Transfers)	Total Openings
Web and Digital Interface Designers	4	1,551	1,689	138	8.90%	1,078	1,216
Web Developers	4	2,442	2,668	226	9.25%	1,487	1,713
Special Effects Artists and Animators	4	988.0	992.0	4.0	0.40%	844.0	848.0
Film and Video Editors	4	508	539	31	6.10%	408	439
Audio and Video Technicians	4	1,470	1,559	89	6.05%	1,271	1,360
Writers and Authors	4	2,420	2,547	127	5.25%	2,303	2,430

(Labor 2023)

In addition, according to O'Net, the projected growth in employment for Maryland is even stronger at 13% (2020-2030) and nationally at 8% over the same period for Video Game Designers.



Wages & Employment Trends for Video Game Designers

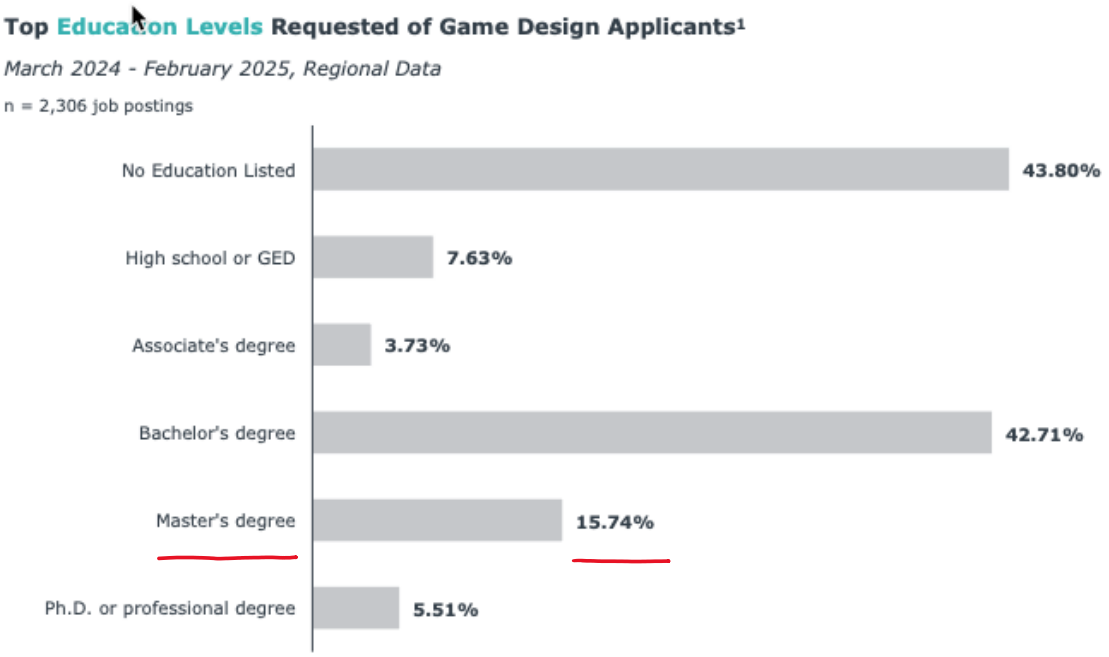
Median wages (2024)
$47.16 hourly, $98,090 annual
Employment (2024) (State of Maryland)
128,900 employees
Projected growth (2024-2034)
Much faster than average (7% or higher)
Projected job openings (2024-2034)
9,100

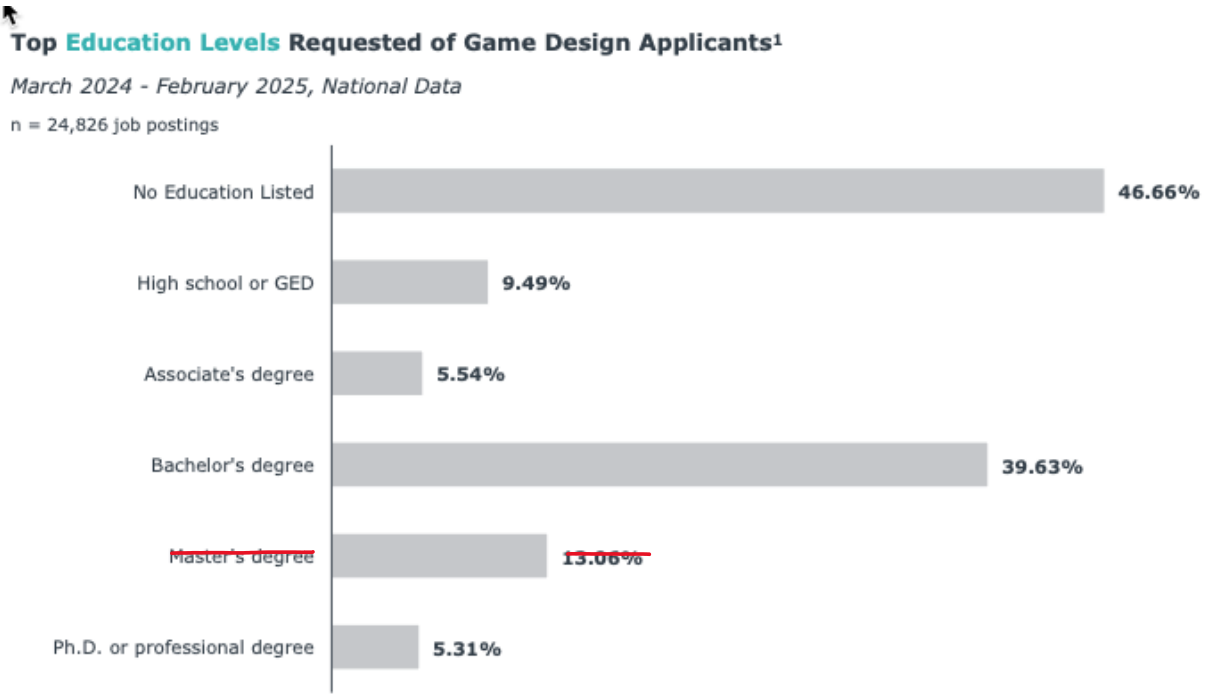
(O'NET and Games 2025)

Why a Master of Professional Studies is Needed *(Relates to LOI question)*

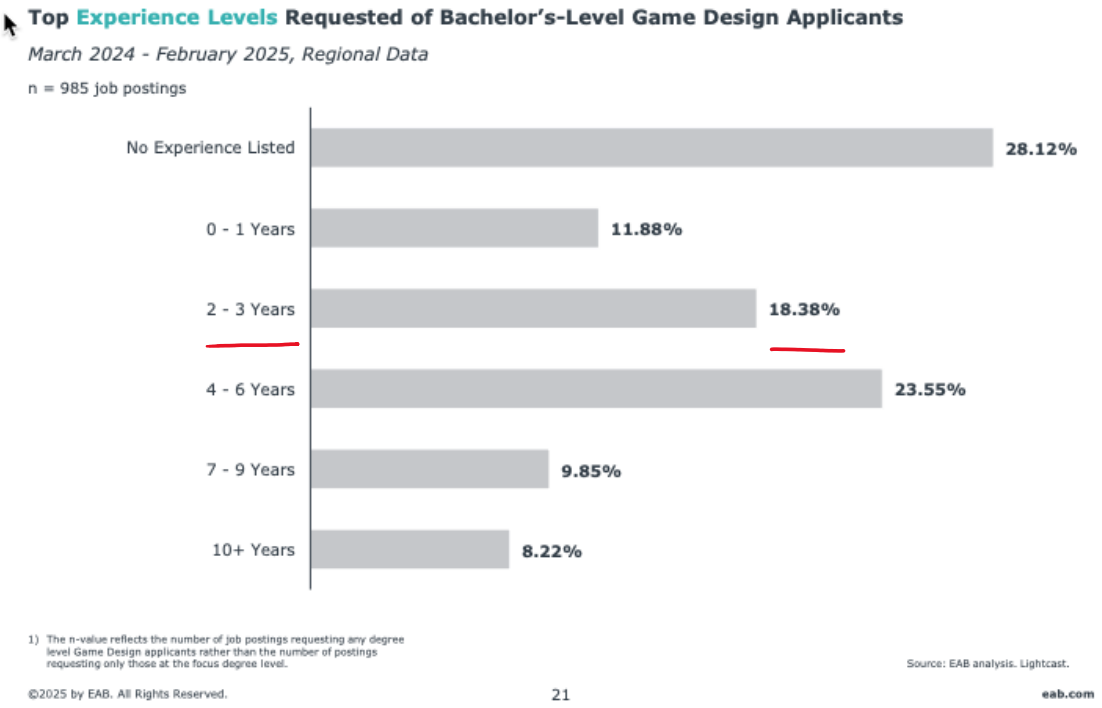
While there is healthy growth in the games industry and expanding opportunities, it is still a highly competitive field.

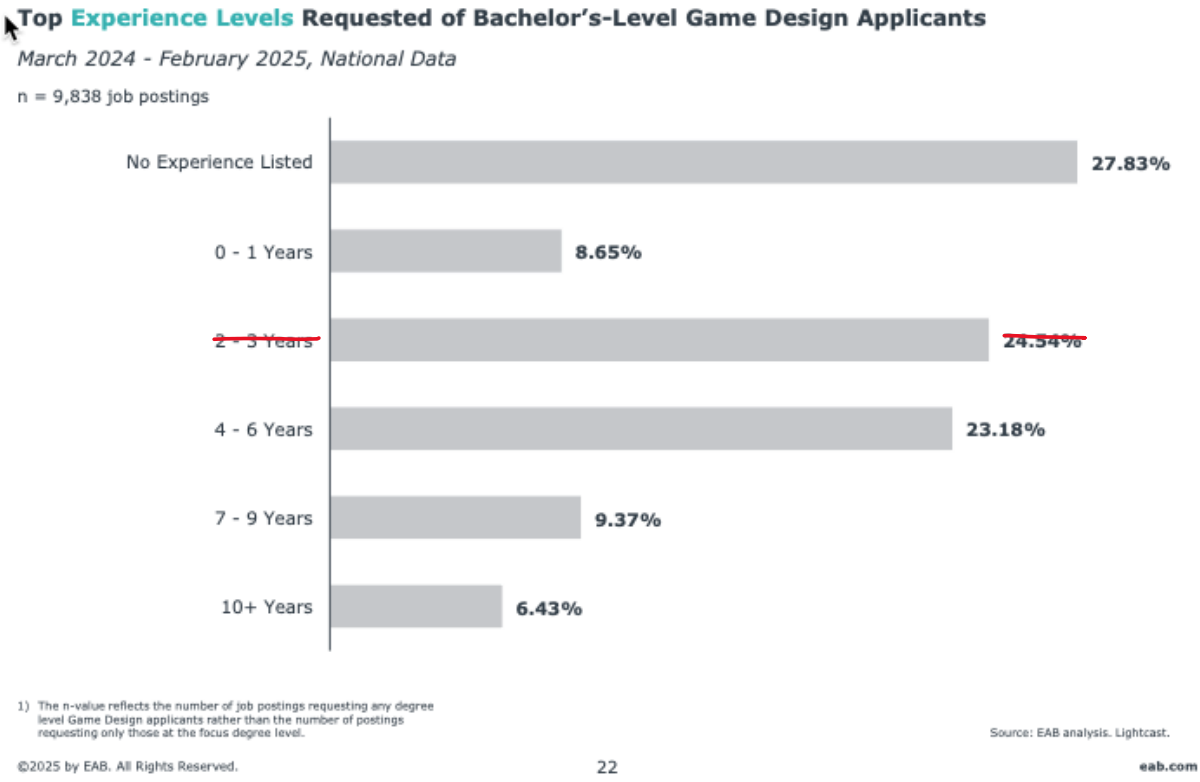
An MPS in Game Design prepares a graduate to be more prepared to be successful in a competitive jobs market and to be uniquely qualified to apply for 13% to 15% of job openings in game design.





Furthermore, the MPS degree adds 2 – 3 years more experience which allows them to meet a threshold required of 18 - 24% of job postings.

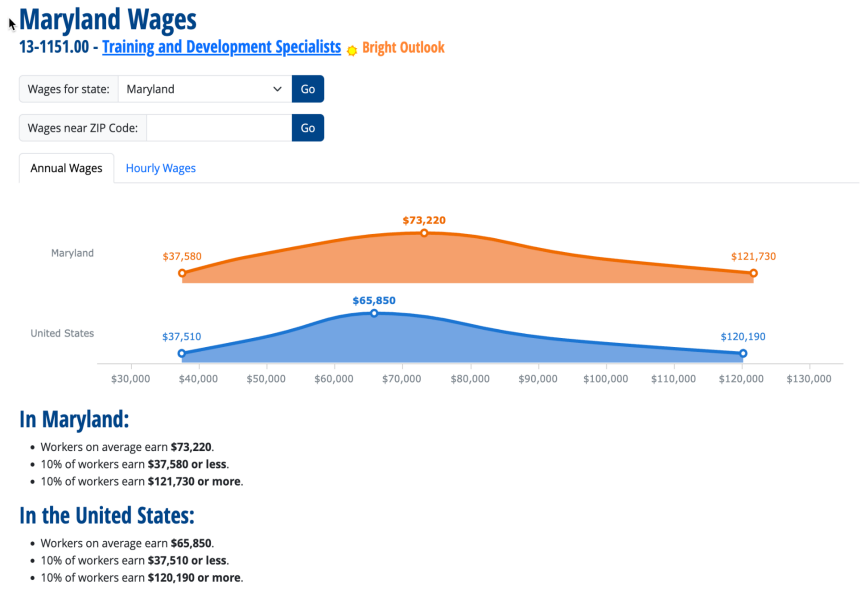




(Edmonds 2025)

In addition, game design has a wider scope of impact, because gamification is a skill required of instructional designers and trainers & developers whose occupational outlook crosses many disciplines and industries. Training and Development specialists, which includes instructional designers and

corporate trainers, register an 11% projected increase in job openings in the next 10 years with a median annual salary of $73,220 in Maryland and $65,850 nationally.



(O'NET and Games 2025)

Employment projections data for training and development specialists, 2024–34

Occupational Title	SOC Code	Employment, 2024	Projected Employment, 2034	Change, 2024–34		Employment by Industry
				Percent	Numeric	
SOURCE: U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, Employment Projections program						
Training and development specialists	13-1151	452,300	501,000	11	48,700	Get data

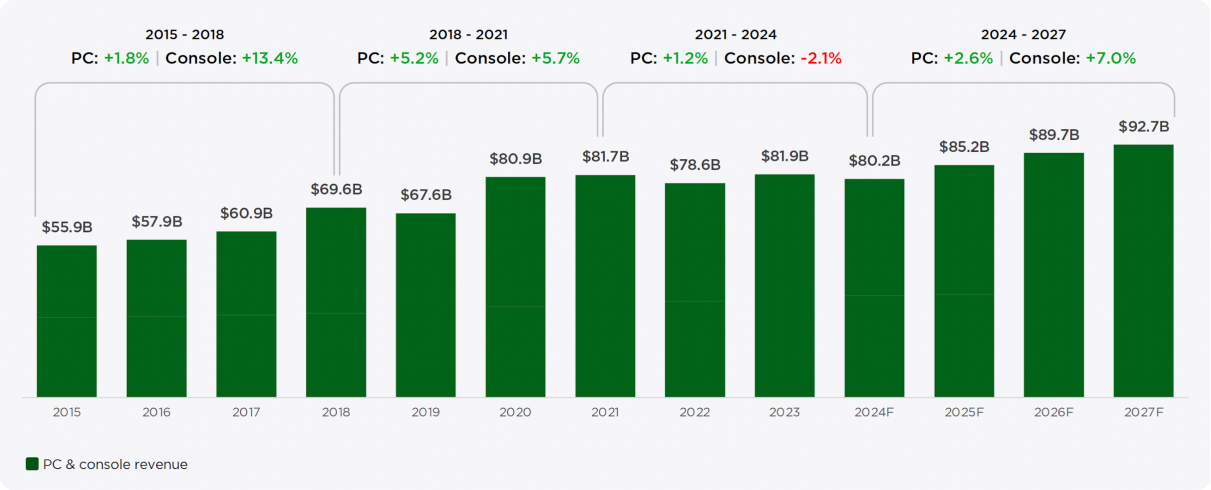
Additional evidence is available from the growth of the video games and gamification industry itself, which increases the likelihood of ever increasing need for game design professionals. (O'NET and Development 2025)

Games Industry Outlook

The digital games industry continues to grow rapidly across the globe:

PC and console software revenues in billion USD

Global | 2015-2027F



Source: Newzoo Games Market Reports and Forecasts | Updated February 2025

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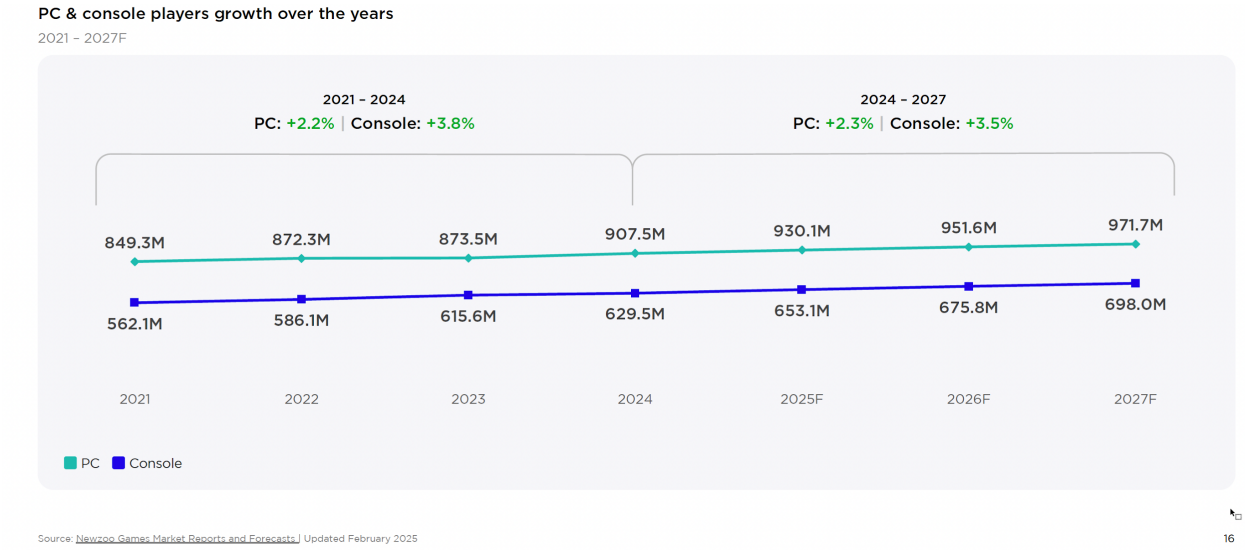
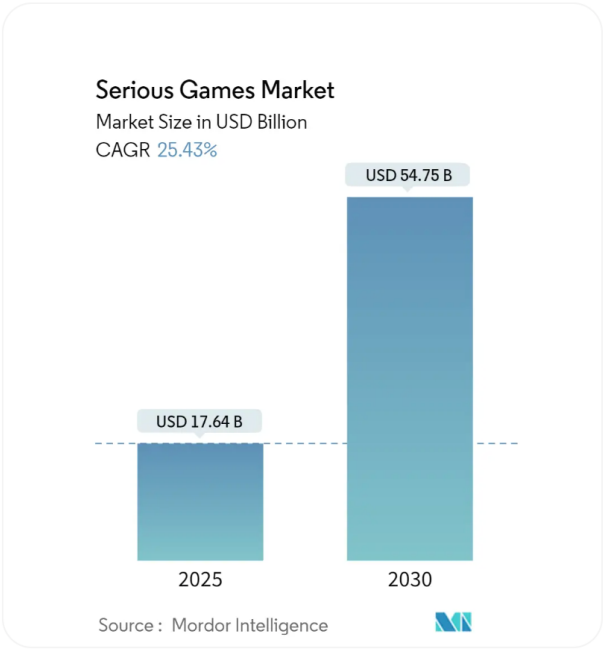
The number of games players continues to rapidly rise:



Educational games are steadily increasing and projected to rise further:



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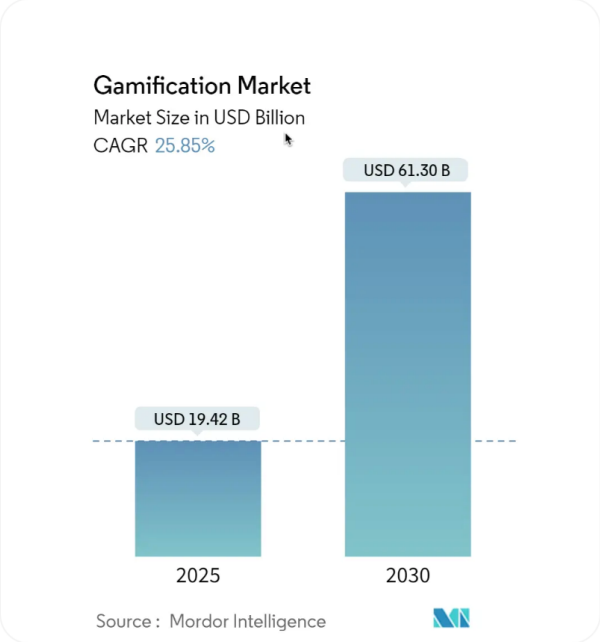
Study Period	2019 - 2030
Market Size (2025)	USD 17.64 Billion
Market Size (2030)	USD 54.75 Billion
CAGR (2025 - 2030)	25.43 %
Fastest Growing Market	Middle East and Africa
Largest Market	Asia-Pacific
Market Concentration	Low

Major Players

DESIGNING DIGITALLY · ARA · ES GROUP · CCS Digital Education · GRENDEL GAMES

*Disclaimer: Major Players sorted in no particular order

The gamification market, secondary to console games, but more common through-out the corporate and marketing sectors has a positive growth outlook:



Share

Study Period	2019 - 2030
Market Size (2025)	USD 19.42 Billion
Market Size (2030)	USD 61.30 Billion
CAGR (2025 - 2030)	25.85 %
Fastest Growing Market	Asia Pacific
Largest Market	North America
Market Concentration	Medium

Major Players

Microsoft AON SAP cognizant MPS Interactive

*Disclaimer: Major Players sorted in no particular order

Aspirations for Student Achievement and Placement

The MPS in Game Design aspires for its graduates to become creative leaders and innovators who bridge artistic imagination with technological and managerial expertise. Student achievement is measured not only by mastery of production tools but also by the ability to conceptualize, design, and deliver playable experiences that demonstrate originality, coherence, and cultural relevance.

Student Achievement Goals

By completion, graduates will be able to:

- Produce a functional, polished, and portfolio-ready game prototype that demonstrates creative authorship and professional execution.
- Present a comprehensive design dossier including documentation, production pipeline materials, usability findings, and market rationale.
- Demonstrate leadership and collaboration across multi-role, remote creative teams.
- Articulate a personal creative philosophy grounded in ethical practice, inclusivity, and cultural awareness.
- Engage with industry and independent sectors through conferences, publishing, and professional networks.

Aspirations for Graduate Placement

The program's flexible structure and emphasis on interdisciplinary practice support a broad range of professional outcomes across the creative and technology sectors.
Expected placement pathways include:

Career Path	**Potential Roles and Contexts**
Game Design & Development	Game Designer, Systems Designer, Narrative Designer, Level Designer, UI/UX Designer
Production & Leadership	Producer, Project Manager, Product Owner, Studio Director, Indie Developer
Visual & Technical Art	Art Director, Technical Artist, Environment or Concept Artist, 3D Asset Specialist
Creative Entrepreneurship	Founder of independent studio, content creator, creative consultant
Education, Training & Research	Game Design Educator, Learning Experience Designer, Corporate Trainer, Researcher in Interactive Media

Because of its portfolio-based assessment model, graduates leave with tangible, demonstrable outcomes that support immediate entry or advancement in creative industries.

The program also prepares students to contribute to emerging applications of game design—including serious games, simulation, XR storytelling, and educational technology—expanding opportunities beyond traditional entertainment sectors.

Ultimately, the MPS in Game Design aspires to graduate reflective practitioners who not only produce compelling interactive experiences but also lead the evolution of the field—advancing the creative, ethical, and social dimensions of game design as a professional, educational, and artistic discipline.

2. **Present data and analysis projecting market demand and the availability of openings in a job market to be served by the new program.**
3. **Discuss and provide evidence of market surveys that clearly provide quantifiable and reliable data on the educational and training needs and the anticipated number of vacancies expected over the next 5 years.**
4. **Provide data showing the current and projected supply of prospective graduates.**

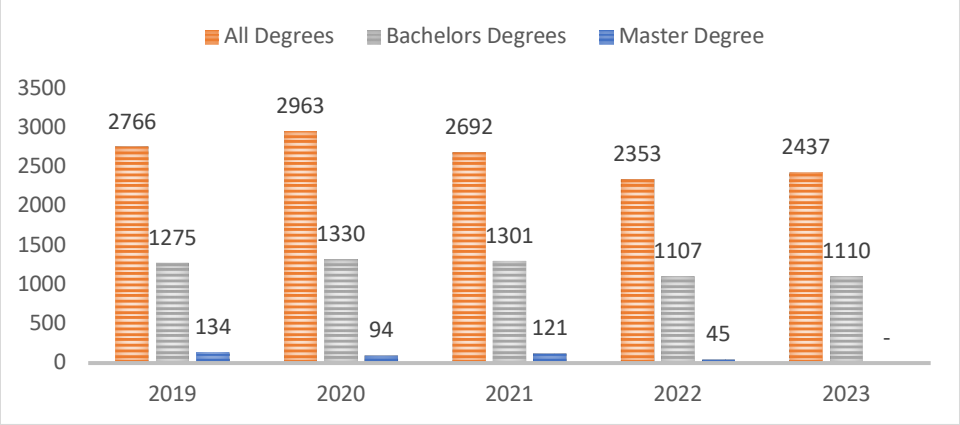
Growing student demand for relevant programs in the region and at Maryland Institute College of Art suggests an opportunity for launch despite growing competition. Maryland Institute College of Art does not yet offer a bachelor's-level game design program but reported completions for other existing

programs under the analyzed CIP codes during this period. Six of the top 10 institutions reporting relevant completions in the 2022-2023 academic year, including Maryland Institute College of Art, increased completions since the 2018-2019 academic year. Notably, Maryland Institute College of Art reported a large rise in completions under the CIP code for Animation, Interactive Technology, Video Graphics, and Special Effects (from zero to 41), suggesting a possible concentration area for the proposed program.

Bachelor's of Game Design graduates provide one avenue for recruitment. Regional Institutions report an increase of graduates from 61 in 2021-2022 to 73 graduates in 2022-2023. (Edmonds 2025) National institutions report a slight increase in total graduates from 1,107 in 2021-2022 to 1,110 in 2022-2023. MICA will recruit from the accumulation of BA / BFA graduates, because the up-to-date content of the degree, inclusion of leadership and project management components are well suited for mid-career upskilling for currently employed game design professionals.

The MPS in Game Design will be integrated into the final year of study for MICA's BFA in Game Design, so that a student may complete their BFA and MPS in Game Design within 5 years of study. The BFA in Game Design graduates should provide a reliable stream of students who choose to further their skills and expand their portfolio by continuing into the MPS program. The MPS in Game Design curriculum is sequenced in such a way to integrate 12 credits of the BFA in Game Design toward the 30 credits of the MPS. A MICA BFA graduate can begin their MPS studies immediately upon graduation and complete the degree within 3 semesters (Fall, Spring, Summer).

National Academic Degree Completions in Game Design Studies (DATAUSA 2025)



As noted in the EAB Feasibility and DATAUSA sources referenced, the number of bachelor's degree has been in decline since 2020 as have the number of Master's degrees awarded. Nevertheless, the industry and career outlook remains strong creating an opportunity for MICA to expand into this area. With an enrollment projection of 8 to 18 students per cohort (3 cohorts per academic year for a total of 16 to 44 students), we would need to only recruit from 1% to 4% of national graduates, including our own from our own MICA undergraduate class.

Maryland Institute College of Art - last completer count - 2023 (Source: IPEDS)	CIP CODE	4th Year - Target Completers	4th Year - Target Majors (completers *2)~	Net Increase in Completers - Year 4	Net Increase in Majors - Year 4
4	Cinematography and Film/Video Production Bachelor's degree)	20	39	16	31
41	Animation Interactive Technology Video Graphics and Special Effects Bachelor's degree)*	59	117	18	35
NA	Sound Arts**	5	10	5	10
6	Game and Interactive Media Design	12	24	6	12
NA	Media Arts Core/General-No Co Major	9	18	9	18
Baseline - Completers		**Total 4th Year Target**	**Total 4th Year - Major/ Specialization Estimate**	**Total Net 4th year Completer Estimate**	**Total Net 4th Year Major / Specialization Estimate**
53		**96**	**191**	**54**	**107**
Notes					
*We do not anticipate an impact on traditional photography, but we do expect additional exposure and engagement (majors, minors, double-majors) with animation/interactive and believe this situates the program for future specializations in areas such as special effects and production design.					
**Sound art is typically embedded in other program tracks (most often digital arts or media arts). We expect 3-5 completers or 6-10 majors by year 4.					
~Please note we estimate majors multiplying completers by a factor of 2 given many students do not immediately declare a major at MICA. On many campsues it would be reasonable to use a factor of 3 for such estimates, but we are approaching					
Source: IPEDS					

Enrollment Expectations, MICA Program Proposal BFA in Creative Media Production (Barclay 2025)

Additionally, using **MHEC's Appendix B** (released Dec. 2024), we find corresponding support which should not be surprising given the use of the same BLS data. Specifically, we see that many of the related subdisciplines and related "completer" rates over the last four-years (a) do not keep pace with average expected growth rates and (b) project a lower contribution to the ability to fill projected openings / growth needs. The three that currently have a "higher" completer trend over the last four years than the average projected job growth trend still account for a small ratio of graduates to openings and are noted as high self-employment SOCS codes and in high demand here in Maryland.

Occupation	CIP Title	Values Average of Total New Job Postings in 2023	Average of Growth, 2022-2032	Average of Percent Growth, 2022-2032	New Openings From Growth, Labor Force Exits, and Transfers, 2022 - 2032	Average of Average Annual Openings, 2023	Sum of 2022	Completer Trend	Completer Trend Lower or Higher than Growth Trend	Variance to Average of projected Growth Need	Contribution to Sector (Annual Completers/Annual new Openings)
Art Directors	Graphic Design.		97	9.50%	1095	110	2	100.00%			
Art Directors	Intermedia/Multimedia.		97	9.50%	1095	110	39	-17.02%			
Art Directors Total			**97**	**9.50%**	**1095**	**110**	**41**	**-14.58%**	**Lower**	**(1054)**	**0.04**
Graphic Designers	Commercial and Advertising Art.		378	8.77%	3960	396	3	-72.73%			
Graphic Designers	Design and Visual Communications, General.		378	8.77%	3960	396	71	1.43%			
Graphic Designers	Graphic Design.		378	8.77%	3960	396	2	100.00%			
Graphic Designers	Industrial and Product Design.		378	8.77%	3960	396	1				
Graphic Designers	Web Page, Digital/Multimedia and Information Resources Design.		378	8.77%	3960	396	160	23.08%			
Graphic Designers Total			**378**	**8.77%**	**3960**	**396**	**237**	**11.79%**	**Higher**	**(3723)**	**0.06**
Interior Designers	Interior Design.		116	8.45%	1385	139	8				
Interior Designers Total			**116**	**8.45%**	**1395**	**139**	**8**		**Not Sufficient 4 year Trend**	**(1377)**	**0.01**
Market Research Analysts and Marketing	Business Analytics.	1392	2635	16.72%	17917	1793	15	-31.82%			
Market Research Analysts and Marketing	Marketing/Marketing Management, General.	1392	2635	16.72%	17917	1793	386	8.12%			
Market Research Analysts and Marketing Specialists Total		**1392**	**2635**	**16.72%**	**17917**	**1793**	**401**	**5.80%**	**Lower**	**(17516)**	**0.02**
Marketing Managers	Apparel and Textile Marketing Management.	2536	665	9.46%	6403	640					
Marketing Managers	Marketing/Marketing Management, General.	2536	665	9.46%	6403	640	386	8.12%			
Marketing Managers Total		**2536**	**665**	**9.46%**	**6403**	**640**	**386**	**8.12%**	**Lower**	**(6017)**	**0.06**
Special Effects Artists and Animators	Animation, Interactive Technology, Video Graphics, and Special Effects		97	10.10%	1038	104	83	-2.35%			
Special Effects Artists and Animators	Drawing.		97	10.10%	1038	104	2	-50.00%			
Special Effects Artists and Animators	Game and Interactive Media Design.		97	10.10%	1038	104	3	200.00%			
Special Effects Artists and Animators	Graphic Design.		97	10.10%	1038	104	2	100.00%			
Special Effects Artists and Animators	Intermedia/Multimedia.		97	10.10%	1038	104	39	-17.02%			
Special Effects Artists and Animators	Painting.		97	10.10%	1038	104	26	-21.21%			
Special Effects Artists and Animators	Web Page, Digital/Multimedia and Information Resources Design.		97	10.10%	1038	104	160	23.08%			
Special Effects Artists and Animators Total			**97**	**10.10%**	**1038**	**104**	**315**	**4.65%**	**Lower**	**(723)**	**0.30**
Web and Digital Interface Designers	Computer and Information Sciences, General.		308	19.18%	1546	155	698	5.60%			
Web and Digital Interface Designers	Computer Programming/Programmer, General.		308	19.18%	1546	155	2	-33.33%			
Web and Digital Interface Designers	Computer Science.		308	19.18%	1546	155	1505	41.85%			
Web and Digital Interface Designers	Design and Visual Communications, General.		308	19.18%	1546	155	71	1.43%			
Web and Digital Interface Designers	Digital Communication and Media/Multimedia.		308	19.18%	1546	155	300	2.74%			
Web and Digital Interface Designers	Graphic Design.		308	19.18%	1546	155	2	100.00%			
Web and Digital Interface Designers	Information Science/Studies.		308	19.18%	1546	155	1326	20.77%			
Web and Digital Interface Designers	Web Page, Digital/Multimedia and Information Resources Design.		308	19.18%	1546	155	160	23.08%			
Web and Digital Interface Designers	Web/Multimedia Management and Webmaster.		308	19.18%	1546	155	4	-42.86%			
Web and Digital Interface Designers Total			**308**	**19.18%**	**1546**	**155**	**4068**	**22.42%**	**Higher**	**2522**	**2.63**
Web Developers	Computer Programming/Programmer, General.	1210	507	21.11%	2138	214	2	-33.33%			
Web Developers	Computer Science.	1210	507	21.11%	2138	214	1505	41.85%			
Web Developers	Web Page, Digital/Multimedia and Information Resources	1210	507	21.11%	2138	214	160	23.08%			
Web Developers	Web/Multimedia Management and Webmaster.	1210	507	21.11%	2138	214	4	-42.86%			
Web Developers Total		**1210**	**507**	**21.11%**	**2138**	**214**	**1671**	**39.13%**	**Higher**	**(467)**	**0.78**
Project Management Specialists	Business Administration and Management, General.		3920	10.86%	30139	3014	2868	8.60%			
Project Management Specialists	Business/Commerce, General.		3920	10.86%	30139	3014	304	-23.81%			
Project Management Specialists	Information Technology Project Management.		3920	10.86%	30139	3014	16	-15.79%			
Project Management Specialists	Project Management.		3920	10.86%	30139	3014	16	-27.27%			
Project Management Specialists Total			**3920**	**10.86%**	**30139**	**3014**	**3204**	**3.99%**	**Lower**	**(26935)**	**0.11**
Architects, Except Landscape and Naval	Architecture.		244	7.89%	2175	217	41	36.67%			
Architects, Except Landscape and Naval Total			**244**	**7.89%**	**2175**	**217**	**41**	**36.67%**	**Lower**	**(2134)**	**0.02**
Producers and Directors	Cinematography and Film/Video Production.	1185	147	5.76%	2291	230	20	-41.18%			
Producers and Directors	Drama and Dramatics/Theatre Arts, General.	1185	147	5.76%	2291	230	96	-15.04%			
Producers and Directors	Film/Cinema/Media Studies.	1185	147	5.76%	2291	230	17	21.43%			

MICA draws its students nationally and internationally and when we look at National trends (see Table 1.2. from the Occupational projections data for the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics - source), we see similar employment projections through 2034 which are likely to be reflected regionally for many of these fields. Due to the interdisciplinary character of game design production there are a variety of relevant occupations.

2024 National Employment Matrix title	2024 National Employment Matrix code	Employment, 2024	Employment, 2034	Employment distribution, percent, 2024	Employment distribution, percent, 2034	Employment change, numeric, 2024–34	Employment change, percent, 2024–34	Percent self employed, 2024	Occupational openings, 2024–34 annual average
Art and design workers	27-1000	950.3	971.8	0.6	0.6	21.5	2.3	27.7	84.9
Special effects artists and animators	27-1014	57.1	58.0	0.0	0.0	0.9	1.6	61.5	5
Writers and Authors	27-3043	135.4	140.3	0.1	4.9	3.6	62.9	13.4	135.4

(ONET, 2026)

D. Reasonableness of Program Duplication:

1. **Identify similar programs in the State and/or same geographical area. Discuss similarities and differences between the proposed program and others in the same degree to be awarded**.

No Master of Professional Studies in Game Design currently exist in the State of Maryland.

2. Provide justification for the proposed program.

E. Relevance to High-demand Programs at Historically Black Institutions (HBIs)

1. Discuss the program's potential impact on the implementation or maintenance of high-demand programs at HBI's.

MICA's MPS in Game Design will have no impact on the implementation or maintenance of high-demand programs at Historically Black Institutions (HBIs). This program is unique in the state.

F. Relevance to the identity of Historically Black Institutions (HBIs)

1. Discuss the program's potential impact on the uniqueness and institutional identities and missions of HBIs.

The MPS in Game Design is focused on MICA's traditional strengths and identity in the areas of art, design, and creativity. As such, there is no significant impact on the uniqueness and institutional identities and missions of HBIs.

G. Adequacy of Curriculum Design, Program Modality, and Related Learning Outcomes (as outlined in COMAR13B.02.03.10):

1. Describe how the proposed program was established, and also describe the faculty who will oversee the program.

Faculty and Mentorship

The program is taught by an interdisciplinary team of faculty drawn from game studios, indie developers, digital artists, and interactive storytellers who are experienced online educators. Faculty mentors guide students in translating artistic intent into production reality while maintaining conceptual depth. Industry advisors contribute to curriculum design, ensuring alignment with current tools, trends, and workflows.

2. Describe educational objectives and learning outcomes appropriate to the rigor, breadth, and (modality) of the program.

Program Learning Outcomes (PLO) to Course Learning Outcomes (CLO) Alignment

The mapping below demonstrates how the program ensures systematic development of analytical, creative, technical, managerial, and ethical competencies required for professional practice.

Each PLO is addressed and reinforced across multiple courses and assessed through applied assignments, prototypes, documentation, and the culminating capstone experience.

Narrative Summary of Alignment

PLO 1 — Analyze the structure and cultural role of games: Embedded through theory, worldbuilding, and systems design. Foundations and Narrative courses build critical frameworks; Systems and Gamification courses expand cultural and behavioral analysis.

PLO 2 — Create professional-level design documentation and communicate complex ideas clearly: Reinforced through documentation-based deliverables including Game Design Documents, system maps, art bibles, production roadmaps, and professional presentations.

PLO 3 — Produce functional prototypes through iterative processes and usability testing: Centrally featured in Prototyping, Level Design, all Studios, and Capstone courses. Students iteratively design, test, and refine prototypes that integrate art, narrative, and gameplay.

PLO 4 — Lead and manage cross-disciplinary creative teams using agile production methods: Developed in Production and Studio courses through collaborative workflows, agile project management, and leadership exercises emphasizing inclusion and accountability.

PLO 5 — Apply market, ethical, and aesthetic considerations to real-world game projects: Explored in courses on Business Strategy, Gamification, Play Theory, and Studio projects emphasizing ethics, accessibility, sustainability, and social impact.

Program Learning Outcome Alignment by Course

Course or Track	Aligned PLO(s)	Evidence / Example CLOs
Foundations of Game Design & Play Theory	PLO 1, 2, 3, 5	CLOs 1–2, 4–5: Formal analysis; ethical critique; design iteration.
Game Systems, Mechanics & Prototyping	PLO 2, 3	CLOs 1–4, 6: Functional prototypes; usability cycles; iterative feedback.
Narrative, Character & Worldbuilding	PLO 1, 2, 5	CLOs 1, 4–6: Narrative theory; design documentation; cultural coherence.
Visual Design & Art Direction Track	PLO 1-5	CLOs 1–6: Visual systems, brand identity, production, lead review and revision, aesthetics.

Game Design & Interactive Systems Track	PLO 1– 5	CLOs 1–6: Systemic thinking; emergent play; documentation; ethics, lead testing.
Production, Leadership & Strategy Track	PLO 2–5	CLOs 1–5: Agile management, inclusive leadership, business ethics.
Gamification, Learning & Applied Game Design Track	PLO 1, 3, 5	CLOs 1–5: Motivation design; data-driven iteration; ethical engagement.
Professional Electives / Residency	PLO 1, 2, 5	CLOs 1–3: Industry engagement; reflective practice; professional communication.
Capstone I: Concept & Pre-Production	PLO 1–4	CLOs 1–4: GDD creation; concept validation; production planning.
Capstone II: Production & Launch	PLO 2–5	CLOs 1–5: Final prototype; QA testing; public presentation; reflective analysis.

In the table above we see the structured integration of the Program Learning Outcomes across the curriculum. Each course contributes to at least two PLOs, ensuring reinforcement through iterative practice, documentation, and leadership experience.

Return on Investment

Internships and coursework within the program will develop essential, real-world competencies—including game development management, production skills, presentation skills, and concept development. The games industry is highly specialized at the entry level for students seeking employment; there are openings for applying one skill on a production team, for example. For an entrepreneurial student, who is looking to develop their own indie game by themselves or with a small team, the program also equips them with the guided opportunity to develop the game as their capstone project. The primary purpose of this program is to raise the competitive level of the student's game design portfolio, add scaffolded advanced experience to their resume, and help them specialize in an area of interest.

For prospective students, the MPS in Game Design presents an exciting and timely opportunity to take the skills and aesthetic style they've already developed and get involved in rapidly expanding industry with a global economic base. There is a side industry as well in gamification, in which businesses add gaming elements to marketing efforts and need employees dedicated to conceptualizing, designing and coding these programs.

Value Proposition:

- Speed + Substance: Graduate in ~12 months with a functional build, usability data, and a professional pitch deck.
- Focus: Choose among three tracks (Visual, Systems, Production) that match hiring lanes; add 1-credit micro-electives for targeted upskilling.
- Network: Optional 3-credit industry residency at a major conference offers field immersion akin to the locational benefits of LA/NYC.

- Ethics & Access: Inclusive, accessible, and globally aware design practices are integrated, not peripheral.
- For Working Pros: Keep your job, keep your location, advance your role.

The program prepares students with employ in-demand skills as the following table demonstrates:

A. Creative / Media Production Skills

Employer Skill	MPS Courses Where Addressed	Notes on Alignment / Typical Outputs
Graphic Design	Style Guides & Art Direction for Games; Visual Storytelling & Environment Design; UI/UX Optimization (elective)	Brand systems, HUD/UI composition, palette and iconography guidelines, marketing one-sheets.
Web Design	Level Design & Interaction Architecture; UI/UX Optimization (elective)	Information architecture, interface navigation patterns, responsive layout logic applied to game launchers/companion sites.
Digital Arts	Generative 3D Assets for Game Design; Visual Storytelling & Environment Design	Full pipeline from concept to textured, optimized assets for real-time engines.
Branding	Style Guides & Art Direction for Games; Business of Games & Market Strategy	Visual identity, audience positioning, trailer/messaging consistency.
Illustration	Visual Storytelling & Environment Design; Narrative, Character & Worldbuilding	Concept art, character sheets, key art.
Typography	Style Guides & Art Direction; Visual Storytelling & Environment Design; UI/UX Optimization (elective)	Legibility and hierarchy for menus/HUD, motion type in trailers.
Storyboarding	Narrative, Character & Worldbuilding; Game Studio I	Cinematic boards, interaction beats, cutscene planning.
Storytelling	Narrative, Character & Worldbuilding; Principles of Gamification & Behavioral Design; Games for Learning, Health & Social Impact	Branching narrative, environmental storytelling, outcomes-aligned serious games.
Content Creation	Game Systems, Mechanics & Prototyping; Game Studio II	Playable builds, devlogs, trailers, store pages.
Motion Graphics	Style Guides & Art Direction; Visual Storytelling & Environment Design; Game Studio II	UI transitions, trailer lower thirds, title sequences.
Video Editing	Game Studio II; Game Production & Agile Pipelines	Playtest reels, promo trailers, sizzle cuts.
Video Production	Game Studio II; Sound Design & Audio Production (elective)	Capture pipelines, shot lists, on-engine cinematics.
Post-Production	Game Studio II; Advanced 2D & 3D Asset Creation	Compositing, color correction, audio polish, final export specs.
Filmmaking	Narrative, Character & Worldbuilding; Visual Storytelling & Environment Design; Game Studio II	Camera language in engine, cutscene direction, narrative pacing.
Special/Visual Effects	Generative 3D Assets for Game Design; Game Systems, Mechanics &	Particle systems, shaders, lighting & physics-based effects.

(SFX/VFX)	Prototyping; Emerging Game Technologies (elective)	
Photography	Visual Storytelling & Environment Design; Game Studio I	Lighting reference, composition studies, marketing image capture.

B. Technical / Computing and Game-Engine Skills

Employer Skill	MPS Courses Where Addressed	Notes on Alignment / Typical Outputs
Game Design	Foundations of Game Design & Play Theory; Game Systems, Mechanics & Prototyping; Systems Design & Emergent Gameplay	Design docs, prototype loops, balancing reports.
Simulations	Systems Design & Emergent Gameplay; Experience Systems & Data-Driven Design	Agent behaviors, telemetry-driven tuning, serious/learning simulations.
Video Game Development	Game Systems, Mechanics & Prototyping; Level Design & Interaction Architecture; Game Studio I & II	Grey-box to polished playable prototype.
Computer Science (applied)	Game Systems, Mechanics & Prototyping; Procedural & Generative Design Tools	Algorithmic thinking, runtime constraints, performance awareness.
Python	Procedural & Generative Design Tools; Emerging Game Technologies (elective)	Tooling scripts, data pipelines, procedural content experiments.
C++	Game Systems, Mechanics & Prototyping (Unreal focus option); Emerging Game Technologies (elective)	Engine-level features, performance-sensitive modules (optional depth).
JavaScript	Level Design & Interaction Architecture (tooling/UI); UI/UX Optimization (elective)	Web-based tools, companion dashboards, build pipelines.
Scripting (general)	Game Systems, Mechanics & Prototyping; Level Design & Interaction Architecture	C#/Blueprints/visual scripting for mechanics and triggers.
HTML / HyperText Markup Language	UI/UX Optimization (elective); Indie Game Publishing & Crowdfunding (store pages)	Microsites, store listings, devlogs.
3D Modeling	Generative 3D Assets for Game Design; Visual Storytelling & Environment Design	Hard-surface/organic modeling, retopo/UVs, LODs.
Game Engine	Game Systems, Mechanics & Prototyping; Level Design & Interaction Architecture; Game Studio I & II	Unity/Unreal production workflows, build/deploy, profiling.

C. Business, Production, and Leadership Skills

Employer Skill	MPS Courses Where Addressed	Notes on Alignment / Typical Outputs
Project Management	Game Production & Agile Pipelines; Game Studio I & II	Sprints, burndowns, risk registers, milestone reports.
Workflow Management	Game Production & Agile Pipelines; Systems Integration within tracks	Source control, versioning, asset pipelines, QA gates.
Strategic Planning	Business of Games & Market Strategy; Managing Creative Teams & Communication	Roadmaps, OKRs, audience/market analyses.
Business Development	Business of Games & Market Strategy; Indie Game Publishing & Crowdfunding (elective)	Pitch decks, publisher outreach, funding plans.

Auditing	Playtesting & Usability Methods (elective); Experience Systems & Data-Driven Design	Usability audits, telemetry reviews, accessibility audits.
Finance	Business of Games & Market Strategy	P&L basics, revenue models, monetization ethics & compliance.
Customer Relationship Management	Managing Creative Teams & Communication; Business of Games & Market Strategy	Community management plans, retention metrics, comms calendars.
New Product Development	Game Studio I & II; Systems Design & Emergent Gameplay; Principles of Gamification & Behavioral Design	Concept validation, prototyping, go-to-market assets.

3. Explain how the institution will:

a) provide for assessment of student achievement of learning outcomes in the program

b) document student achievement of learning outcomes in the program

The nature of art and design pedagogy includes robust formative assessment as students develop skills in their chosen discipline or medium. In addition, this program, as with all programs at MICA, will engage in ongoing summative assessment of student learning relative to their program learning outcomes (PLOs). Student achievement of learning outcomes will be documented in the program's Annual Report. The student artifacts, rubrics, and associated data used in the assessment will be saved in MICA's PLO Assessment Archive, which was established in 2015-16.

4. Provide a list of courses with title, semester credit hours and course descriptions, along with a description of program requirements.

Course Descriptions and Course Learning Outcomes are provided in Appendix I

Program Requirements

Category	Credits	Description
Foundations	9	Core theory and skills in play, systems, and storytelling
Track Specialization	9	Three courses plus one studio within a focused area
Professional Electives	6	Short modules or a Game Industry Residency
Capstone Sequence	6	Two courses culminating in a playable prototype
Total	30 credits	

Pedagogy and Format

The MPS in Game Design is taught 100% online and asynchronously, allowing flexibility for working professionals worldwide. Courses combine multimedia lectures, guided production projects, and peer

critique within collaborative online environments. Each course incorporates real-time mentoring, video feedback, and structured iteration cycles to mirror industry practice.

The 8-week format encourages focused immersion and rapid prototyping, aligning with production sprints in professional studios. Students build a cumulative body of work demonstrating both creative identity and leadership potential.

For MPS:

Major Studies in Art/ Design	Other Studies in Art/ Design	Electives	Total
18 credits	6 credits	6 credits	30 Credits
60%	20	20%	100%

Semester-by-Semester Generic Course Sequence

Semester 1 (Fall)
Term A
- *Applied Game Theory for Designers* (3 cr)

Term B
- *Game Systems, Mechanics & Prototyping* (3 cr)

6 credits total – establishes systems and play theory foundation.

Semester 2 (Spring)
Term A
- *Narrative, Character & Worldbuilding for Games* (3 cr)
- *Specialization Track Course 1* (3 cr)

Term B
- *Specialization Track Course 2* (3 cr)

9 credits total – completes the core and introduces specialization.

Semester 3 (Summer)
Term A
- *Specialization Track Course 3* (3 cr)

Term B
- *Professional Elective* (3 cr)
- *Professional Elective or Game Industry Residency* (3 cr)

9 credits total – applied specialization and professional engagement.

Semester 4 (Fall)
Term A
- *Game Studio I: Concept & Pre-Production* (3 cr)

Term B
- *Game Studio II: Production & Launch* (3 cr)

6 credits total – capstone culminating in a playable prototype.

Track by Track Sequence

Semesters	Visual Design & Art Direction	Credits	Game Design & Interactive Systems	Credits	Gamification, Learning & Applied Game Design	Credits
Fall 2026						
Semester 1, Term 1	Applied Game Theory for Designers	3	Applied Game Theory for Designers	3	Applied Game Theory for Designers	**3**
Semester 1, Term 2	Game Systems, Mechanics & Prototyping	3	Game Systems, Mechanics & Prototyping	3	Game Systems, Mechanics & Prototyping	**3**
Spring 2027						
Semester 2, Term 1	Narrative, Character & Worldbuilding for Games	3	Narrative, Character & Worldbuilding for Games	3	Narrative, Character & Worldbuilding for Games	**3**
Semester 2, Term 2	Generative 3D Assets for Game Design	3	Systems Design & Gameplay	3	Principles of Gamification & Behavioral Design	**3**
Semester 2, Term 2	Visual Storytelling & Virtual Environments	3	Level Design & Interaction Architecture	3	Games for Learning, Health & Social Impact	**3**
Summer 2027						
Semester 3, Term 1	Style Guides & Art Direction for Games	3	Procedural & Generative Design Tools	3	Experience Design & Data-Driven Interactions	**3**
Semester 3, Term 2	Elective	3	Elective	3	Elective	**3**
Semester 3, Term 2	Elective	3	Elective	3	Elective	**3**
Fall 2027						
Semester 4, Term 1	Game Studio I: Concept & Pre-Production	3	Game Studio I: Concept & Pre-Production	3	Game Studio I: Concept & Pre-Production	**3**
Semester 4, Term 2	Game Studio II: Production & Launch	3	Game Studio II: Production & Launch	3	Game Studio II: Production & Launch	**3**
Total Credits:		**30**		**30**		**30**

5. **Discuss how general education requirements will be met, if applicable.**

Not Applicable

6. **Identify any specialized accreditation or graduate certification requirements for this program and its students.**

   Not Applicable

7. **If contracting with another institution or non-collegiate organization, provide a copy of the written contract.**

   Not Applicable

8. **Provide assurance and any appropriate evidence that the proposed program will provide students with clear, complete, and timely information on the curriculum, course and degree requirements, nature of faculty/student interaction, assumptions about technology competence and skills, technical equipment requirements, learning management system, availability of academic support services and financial aid resources, and costs and payment policies.**

   MICA and the School of Creative and Professional Studies is committed to providing students with clear, complete, and timely information on all matters related to degree programming. Prior to applying to the program, prospective students will have access to the curriculum; course and degree requirements; availability of academic support services and financial aid resources; costs; and payment policies via the MICA website. Throughout the admissions process students will gain additional information on the nature of faculty/student interactions as well as assumptions about technology competence and skills (including suggestions to improve skills prior to the program, if applicable) and technical equipment requirements. Student orientation will include an orientation to the learning management system.

   Meetings between relevant staff offices and the department's leadership team will begin before the program is officially launched. Preliminary introductions with a clear overview of the program, followed by regularly scheduled meetings, per semester, will take place between the Open Studies department leadership and the Office of Advising, Financial Aid, and Student Accounts.

   For students, group meetings for all MPS students will be held each semester in order to provide new and updated departmental and institutional information. These group meetings provide an environment where general departmental questions can be raised so that they can be addressed by faculty and administration.

   These meetings will help to ensure accuracy of all necessary information in regards to: curriculum, course and degree requirements, nature of faculty/student interaction, assumptions about technology competence and skills, technical equipment requirements, learning management system, availability of academic support services, and financial aid resources, and costs and payment policies.

9. **Provide assurance and any appropriate evidence that advertising, recruiting, and admissions materials will clearly and accurately represent the proposed program and the services available.**

Consistent with MICA's long-standing practice of honesty and integrity in its communications, all advertisements, recruiting, and admissions materials related to all concentrations in the MPS in Game Design program will clearly and accurately represent the program and student support services.

H. Adequacy of Articulation (as outlined in COMAR 13B.02.03.19)

1. **If applicable, discuss how the program supports articulation with programs at partner institutions. Provide all relevant articulation agreements. More information for Articulation Agreements may be found here.**

Although there is not a specific articulation agreement for this program, MICA has maintained strong relationships with our local community colleges and has several articulation agreements in place. We expect this program to be of great interest given the high number of prospective students who exhibit interest in game design programming and see the MPS as a pathway to a more competitive portfolio. We expect the approach to also be interesting to transfer-in students given flexibility of the core components of the degree coupled with the opportunity to specialize in a more focused manner with the study tracks.

I. Adequacy of Faculty Resources (as outlined in COMAR 13B.02.03.11).

1. Provide a brief narrative demonstrating the quality of program faculty. Include a summary list of **faculty with appointment type, terminal degree title and field, academic title/rank, status (full-time, part-time, adjunct) and the course(s) each faculty member will teach in the proposed program.**

MICA has one full time faculty member dedicated to game design instruction. As a highly specialized program that integrates a range of disciplines—some of which are not currently offered at MICA—the faculty for the proposed MPS in Game Design program will be carefully recruited through industry partnerships, networking with professionals, and leveraging MICA's existing faculty and their professional networks.

Faculty Expertise

The faculty for the MPS in Game Design will bring expertise in Game Design, Animation, Script Writing, 3D Modeling, Game Engines, and Art Direction. As this program is not yet approved, no specific instructors have been assigned to individual courses. However, during the research and planning phases, MICA has engaged numerous professionals in the field of Game Design and identified a core group to design the first phase of program courses. Upon approval by the Maryland Higher Education Commission (MHEC), we plan to tap into a broader network of our alumni and professionals with their connections to recruit faculty and subject matter experts. These experts will play a key role in producing the courses, ensuring they remain relevant, innovative, and aligned with industry standards.

The table below outlines current faculty resources and qualifications sought in new hires for the MPS in Game Design program.

Faculty							
Name	**FT or PT**	**Year Hired**	**Highest Degree**	**Institution**	**Major**	**Emphasis**	**Courses to be Taught in the Program**
Sam Sheffield	FT	2014	MFA	MICA	Digital Arts	Interactive Art	Applied Game Theory for Designers, Visual Storytelling and Virtual Environments, Game Studio I, Game Studio II
Deborah Baxstrom	PT	2026	MFA	Columbia University	Screenwriting Production	Entertainment Arts	Narrative, Character, and Worldbuilding for Games, Storytelling and Virtual Environments, Scriptwriting electives.
Andrew Keiper	FT	2019	MFA	MICA	Photographic & Electronic Media	Sound/installation	MEA 200 Interdisc Media Arts, MEA 401 Thesis II, Game Studio I: Concept & Pre-Production, Game Studio II: Production & Launch
Alex Lucas	PT	2025	BFA	MICA	Illustration	Game Design	Generative 3 D Assets for Game Design, Style Guides & Art Direction for Games
Vikki Hrody	PT	2025	MFA	Academy of Art University	Animation and Visual Effects	3D Modeling	Game Studio I, Game Studio II, Game Systems, Mechanics & Prototyping, Games for Learning, Health & Social Impact, Principles of Gamification & Behavioral Design
Jason Sloan	FT	2004	MFA	Towson	Interrelated Media/ Sound	Interrelated Media/ Sound	Sound Design electives
Steve Meneely	FT	2011	BFA	MICA	General Fine Arts	3D Animation	Animation electives, Visual Storytelling and Virtual Environments, Systems Design & Gameplay
Erinn Hagerty	FT	2016	MFA	MICA	Interdisciplinary	Animation	Level Design & Interaction Architecture, Animation Electives
Isma Sanz-Pena	FT	2018	MFA	CalArts	Animation	2D Animation	Visual Storytelling & Virtual Environments

Instructional Assignments

Course	Faculty
Applied Game Theory for Designers	Sam Sheffield
Game Systems, Mechanics & Prototyping	Vikki Hrody
Narrative, Character & Worldbuilding for Games	Deborah Baxstrom
Generative 3D Assets for Game Design	Alex Lucas
Visual Storytelling & Virtual Environments	Deborah Baxstrom
Systems Design & Gameplay	Steve Meneely
Level Design & Interaction Architecture	Erinn Hagerty
Principles of Gamification & Behavioral Design	Vikki Hrody
Games for Learning, Health & Social Impact	Vikki Hrody
Style Guides & Art Direction for Games	Alex Lucas
Game Studio I: Concept & Pre-Production	Sam Sheffield , Andrew Keiper, Vikki Hrody
Game Studio II: Production & Launch	Sam Sheffield , Andrew Keiper, Vikki Hrody

Upon program approval, MICA will utilize existent faculty lines to further staff the program appropriately and relative to projected enrollment horizon/projections, with the following staffing plan:

Instructional Staffing Chart

	Course Authors	Instructors Semester 1	Instructors Semester 2	Instructors Semester 3	Instructors Semester 4	Instructors Semester 5	Instructors Semester 6
Cohort 1	4	2	3	3	2	2	3
Cohort 2	2		2	3	3	2	3
Cohort 3	2			2	3	3	2
Cohort 4	2				2	3	3
Cohort 5	2					2	3
Total	**12**	**2**	**5**	**8**	**10**	**12**	**14**

There will be no new funded faculty lines, only re-allocated if additional faculty assignment is required to carry out the curriculum as enrollment builds.

2. Demonstrate how the institution will provide ongoing pedagogy training for faculty in evidenced-based best practices, including training in:

a) Pedagogy that meets the needs of the students

b) The learning management system

c) Evidenced-based best practices for distance education, if distance education is offered.

Faculty Preparation and Professional Development

Preparation for teaching in the program is critical to maintaining MICA's high academic standards. All faculty members must demonstrate fluency in assessment methodologies and the Learning Management System (LMS) environment. To support this, new faculty members are required to participate in workshops focused on using online teaching tools.

MICA encourages and supports the professional development of faculty in a number of ways including three internally funded grant programs that are focused on improvement of curriculum and teaching; these include a grant program specifically for adjunct faculty. In addition to the grant programs, MICA has a culture of peer-based faculty development that is anchored by formal professional development days held four times each academic year. Professional development workshops offered throughout the year as well as on the four professional development days include evidence-based inclusive pedagogies, methodologies for the assessment of student learning, and the use of technology in instruction.

MICA regularly conducts professional development sessions for faculty to ensure that course delivery serves the needs of our current and future students. These offerings are provided prior to the start of each semester, with additional/occasional opportunities occurring during semesters and over breaks.

Some examples of sessions offered this academic year include:

- "The Craft of Teaching" with specific breakouts entitled “New to MICA, New to Teaching,” "Innovation in Teaching,” and "Keeping Practice Alive as a Teacher.”
- “Managing Microagressions in the Studio and Classroom”
- “Utilizing Canvas (MICA’s LMS system)”
- “Approaches to Teaching International Students”
- Round table sessions on "Integrating AI into Teaching and Research” and “Free Speech In and Out of the Classroom”
- "Faculty Course Spa” presented to develop syllabi and Canvas courses.

MICA also provides opportunities for peer-to-peer learning by sponsoring faculty-led teaching circles to research and investigate topics relevant to classroom instruction. For example, there is currently and AI teaching circle underway that will present outcomes to faculty at the August professional development session.

Summary of ongoing professional development initiatives:

- **Internally Funded Grant Programs:** Three grant programs dedicated to curriculum improvement and teaching enhancement.

- **Professional Development Workshops:** Evidence-based sessions offered throughout the year and during two designated professional development days. Topics include inclusive pedagogies, student learning assessment methods, and integrating technology into instruction.

- **Canvas and Curriculum Support:** The SCPS academic unit provides a dedicated instructional design and technology team to support faculty. Services include complete course build-out, workshops each semester, weekly open office hours, individual consultations, and guidance on universal design principles and evidence-based course design.

The program budget includes approximately $4,000 annually to support faculty and program staff’s professional development, ensuring continuous growth and alignment with best practices.

J. Adequacy of Library Resources (as outlined in COMAR 13B.02.03.12).

1. Describe the library resources available and/or the measures to be taken to ensure resources are adequate to support the proposed program.

Decker Library facilitates learning and inquiry through a variety of services, and with the provision of print and nonprint materials, media, equipment, and facilities. The library’s collection consists of 76,068 print titles (including Journal titles, Zines and Artists' books), 6,040 film and video titles, 401,598 e-books, 340 games and video games, and 36 databases with thousands of articles, videos, and images accessible online. The main focus of the library collection is in visual art and design, while also maintaining a broad collection in the humanities. This ratio is designed to complement the varied departments and levels at MICA and it is accessible to students, faculty and staff at MICA as well as the general community. With an annual budget of over $220,000 Decker

Library is able to maintain online access to materials and add approximately 4,500 titles to the collection each year in collaboration with MICA students, staff, and faculty. Fifty to sixty percent of the book budget is spent on acquiring monographs on the visual arts with the remainder building the general collection. Decker Library facilities include ample computers, printers, technology, and a variety of spaces to support individual, group, and classwork. The library is staffed by 3 full-time staff librarians with Master's in Library Science degrees, and three full time staff with related professional degrees. During the 2024 academic year, librarians taught 148 information literacy sessions. Over 11,000 physical items from the library collection circulated last year and over 60,000 electronic items were viewed, downloaded, or streamed, showing a strong usage of the library.

In addition to the Decker Library, MICA has a Materials Library which is a multidisciplinary resource for material research, exploration, and experimentation. The materials Library includes an ever-expanding collection of material samples that are assigned a unique identification number and organized by type.

MICA participates in the Baltimore Academic Libraries Consortium, which permits direct reciprocal borrowing among most four-year colleges in the Baltimore metropolitan area. In-person access to three outstanding art library collections found within one and a half miles of MICA includes: The Milton S. Eisenhower Library at Johns Hopkins University, The Baltimore Museum of Art library, and The Walters Art Gallery library. MICA also has an extensive interlibrary loan program, borrowing and lending materials between libraries all over the world.

K. Adequacy of Physical Facilities, Infrastructure and Instructional Equipment
(as outlined in COMAR 13B.02.03.13)

1. **Provide an assurance that physical facilities, infrastructure and instruction equipment are adequate to initiate the program, particularly as related to spaces for classrooms, staff and faculty offices, and laboratories for studies in the technologies and sciences.**

2. **Provide assurance and any appropriate evidence that the institution will ensure students enrolled in and faculty teaching in distance education will have adequate access to:**

    a) An institutional electronic mailing system, and
    b) A learning management system that provides the necessary technological support for distance education

As the program is 100% asynchronous, students will not access physical campus facilities.

MICA students all have access to specialized, industry standard and cutting-edge software, including:

- Adobe Creative Cloud (including Premiere, After Effects, Photoshop, Illustrator, Animate, and Audition), Autodesk Maya, Apple Logic Pro, Apple Final Cut Pro, Blender, Toon Boom Harmony, TV Paint Animation, Dragonframe, Unity Engine, Ableton Live, iZotope RX, Capture One, Unreal Engine, Touch Designer, Maxon ZBrush, Soundly, DaVinci Resolve, Madmapper

All MICA faculty, staff, and students are provided with a free "@mica.edu" email account. MICA uses the Canvas Learning Management System, which provides a flexible and adaptive e-learning environment that integrates with Google tools and web-conferencing software including Adobe Connect and Zoom. These tools allow students ease of access to course content and the ability to collaborate with faculty and classmates both synchronously and asynchronously.

MICA has implemented a Quality Matters® aligned online course production system in which an instructional designer and a faculty course author collaborate to create an engaging, rigorous, and consistent learning experience that leads to student success. The production system involves an iterative system of building course content, creating lesson media, and approvals at each level of the course build by curriculum directors and academic program leads. The final turnkey course is used by the teaching faculty member who can supplement with additional content as needed while the course is live.

L. Adequacy of Financial Resources with Documentation (as outlined in COMAR13B.02.03.14)

1. Complete **Table 1: Resources and Narrative Rationale**. Provide finance data for the first five years of program implementation. Enter figures into each cell and provide a total for each year. Also provide a narrative rationale for each resource category. If resources have been or will be reallocated to support the proposed program, briefly discuss the sources of those funds.

2. Complete **Table 2: Program Expenditures and Narrative Rationale**. Provide finance data for the first five years of program implementation. Enter figures into each cell and provide a total for each year. Also provide a narrative rationale for each expenditure category.

TABLE: PROGRAM RESOURCES					
Resource Categories	**Year 1**	**Year 2**	**Year 3**	**Year 4 (steady state)**	**Year 5* (3% increase over Yr 4)**
1. Reallocated Funds~	$0	$0	$0	$0	$0
2. Tuition/Fee Revenue (c + g below)	$685,394	$2,489,399	$3,414,929	$5,018,224	$5,168,771
a. Number of F/T Students	16	31	40	72	74
b. Annual Tuition/Fee Rate	$87,126	$89,740	$92,432	$95,205	$98,062
c. Total F/T Revenue (a x b)	$685,394	$2,489,399	$3,414,929	$5,018,224	$5,168,771
d. Number of P/T Students	$0	$0	$0	$0	$0
e. Credit Hour Rate	$0	$0	$0	$0	$0
f. Annual Credit Hour Rate	$0	$0	$0	$0	$0
g. Total P/T Revenue (d x e x f)	$0	$0	$0	$0	$0
3. Grants, Contracts & Other External Sources	$12,500	$24,500	$116,500	$128,500	$132,355
4. Other Sources - Auxiliary	$0	$24,500	$0	$0	$0
TOTAL (Add 1 – 4)	$697,894	$2,538,399	$3,531,429	$5,146,724	$5,301,126

Instruction Outlay	**Net New Students**	**Existent Student Estimate**	**All Net New (internal transfer, continuing) students**	Average Student Load for Core	**total credits**	**student seats**	**# Sections**	**section size Cap**
Year 1	**16**	**0**	**8**	12	95	8	**4**	20
Year 2	**20**	**20**	**28**	42	1,187	28	**14**	20
Year 3	**27**	**20**	**37**	54	2,023	37	**18**	20
Year 4	**32**	**20**	**51**	54	2,775	51	**18**	20

# sections F/T faculty New	$ costs f/t	# Sections Remaining	Assignments to Existent Faculty (FT)~	Assignments to Existent Faculty (PT)	# of Sections P/T Faculty	# Credits P/T faculty	$ cost p/t	$ total instruction	FT to PT Faculty - Section Coverage Ratio
0	$0	4	0	0	4	12	$96,384	**$96,384**	**0.00%**
0	$0	14	0	0	14	42	$337,344	**$337,344**	**0.00%**
0	$0	18	0	0	18	54	$338,850	**$338,850**	**0.00%**
0	$0	18	0	0	18	54	$338,850	**$338,850**	**0.00%**

Tuition Revenue and Required Fees: These expected funds represent the relationship of our enrollment expectations for tuition and fee revenue with a 3% annualized expectation in increase levels after baseline year.

FT/PT Enrollment: Below are the enrollment horizon expectations:

Summer	Year 1 Summer	Year 2 Summer	Year 3 Summer	Year 4 Summer
Continuing/Readmits	0	14	24	31
New	0	8	8	8
Subtotal Degree	**0**	**22**	**32**	**39**
Visiting/Non-degree	0			
Final Summer	**0**	**22**	**32**	**39**
Summer Graduates (-x)	0	0	(5)	(6)
Graduates as % of Continuing	0.0%	0.0%	-62.5%	-75.0%
Eligible to continue	0	22	27	33
Visiting/Non-degree not continuing	0	0	0	0
Net Eligible to continue in fall	**0**	**22**	**27**	**33**
Summer-to-fall attrition (-x)	0	(2)	(3)	(3)
Net attrition rate	0.0%	-10.0%	-10.0%	-10.0%

FALL	Year 1 Fall	Year 2 Fall	Year 3 Fall	Year 4 Fall	Steady State
Continuing/internal transfer - first year will be a mix of internal transfer, transfer-in from other institutions, and double-majors - out years will be new/returning and transfer-in)	0	20	24	29	*Initial Phase - added "net" new students*
New Entering	8	10	15	18	
Subtotal Degree	**8**	**30**	**39**	**47**	
Visiting/Non-degree	0	0	0	0	
Final Fall	**8**	**30**	**39**	**47**	**50**
January Graduates (-x)	0	(7)	(9)	13	
Graduates as % of Continuing	0.0%	-23.5%	-23.1%	27.4%	
Eligible to continue	8	23	30	60	
Visiting/Non-degree not continuing	0	0	0	0	
Net Eligible to continue in Spring	**8**	**23**	**30**	**60**	
Fall-to-spring attrition-NEW (-x)	(0)	(1)	(2)	(2)	
Net attrition rate	-5.0%	-6.5%	-6.5%	-3.9%	

SPRING	Year 1 Spring	Year 2 Spring	Year 3 Spring	Year 4 Spring
Continuing/Readmits	8	21	28	58
New	8	10	12	14
Subtotal Degree	**16**	**31**	**40**	**72**
Visiting/Non-degree	0	0	0	0

Final Spring	**16**	**31**	**40**	**72**
Spring Graduates (-x)	0	(5)	(6)	(11)
Graduates as % of Continuing	0.0%	-23.4%	-21.4%	-19.0%
Eligible to continue	16	26	34	61
Visiting/Non-degree not continuing	0	0	0	0
Net Eligible to continue in Summer	**16**	**26**	**34**	**61**
Spring-to-Summer attrition (-x)	(2)	(3)	(3)	(6)
Net attrition rate	-10.0%	-10.0%	-10.0%	-10.0%

MICA's Administration is responsible for and committed to providing adequate financial support for this prospective program, along with all academic programs. Funding results from tuition revenue and is in place to support faculty salaries for those teaching in this and supporting programs. Additionally, departments are provided with operating budgets to support working needs each academic year. Expenditures are under the discretion of department leadership in collaboration with their program coordinator and the School of Creative and Professional Studies. No new fulltime faculty hires are needed; MICA will utilize existent faculty lines.

TABLE 2: PROGRAM EXPENDITURES:					
Expenditure Categories	**Year 1**	**Year 2**	**Year 3**	**Year 4**	**Year 5 (3% increase)**
1. Faculty (b + c below)**	$96,384	$337,344	$338,850	$338,850	$432,221
a. Number of FTE	0.67	2.33	3.00	3.00	3.00
b. Total Salary	$69,396	$242,888	$243,972	$243,972	$251,291
c. Total Benefits	$26,988	$94,456	$94,878	$94,878	$180,930
2. Admin. Staff (b + c below)	$27,648	$27,648	$27,648	$27,648	$28,477
a. Number of FTE	0	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3
b. Total Salary	$21,600	$21,600	$21,600	$21,600	$22,248
c. Total Benefits (28%)	$6,048	$6,048	$6,048	$6,048	$6,229
3. Support Staff (b + c below)	$0	$0	$0	$0	$0
a. Number of FTE	0	0	1	1	1
b. Total Salary	0	$0	$0	$0	$0.00
c. Total Benefits (28%)	0	$0.00	$0.00	$0.00	$0.00
4. Technical Support and Equipment	$18,658	$26,966	$28,452	$26,966	$27,775
5. Library (3% of new faculty FTE overhead)	$5,160	$13,468	$14,954	$14,954	$15,402
6. New or Renovated Space	$0	$0	$0	$0	$0.00
7. Other Expenses*	$156,498	$138,498	$162,498	$118,998	$122,568
TOTAL (Add 1 – 7)	$304,347	$543,925	$572,401	$527,416	$626,444

*First two years includes start-up expenses (marketing, recruitment, social/digital, etc.) and course authors.

**Part time instructors only.

Faculty costs: Calculated per credit hour taught.

Administrative Staff: An Academic Program Lead, selected from the faculty group and compensated with a stipend, will be selected in year 1 and serve for a 2-year term.

Support Staff: NA

Library: A 3% run rate against total new faculty FTE overhead levels was used for this cost factor.

Technical Support and Equipment: These costs represent software/applications and information technology support (3% of run rate against total new FTE overhead levels for faculty and staff).

Other Expenses: The program costs include start-up funds for course authors, instructional design, marketing, recruitment and ongoing support such as supplies, travel/lodging, lecturer series, curriculum development, catering, dues/memberships, training annual exhibition/capstone projects; book acquisition/subscriptions.

- The project team has the full support documentation that feeds this P&L statement and all of its underlying details, calculations, and assumptions.

- The costs for start-up and steady-state operations require additional discussion and figures represent good faith estimates for the purposes of the internal proposal process.

- *The project can make available the full support documentation that feeds this P&L statement and all of its underlying details, calculations, and assumptions.*

M. Adequacy of Provisions for Evaluation of Program (as outlined in COMAR 13B.02.03.15).

1. **Discuss procedures for evaluating courses, faculty and student learning outcomes.**
2. **Explain how the institution will evaluate the proposed program's educational effectiveness, including assessments of student learning outcomes, student retention, student and faculty satisfaction, and cost-effectiveness.**

Evaluation of faculty and their teaching effectiveness follow guidelines set out in MICA's Faculty Handbook and the evaluation of part-time faculty follows a college-wide process and procedure developed as part of the collective bargaining agreement with SEIU, the union representing the adjunct faculty at MICA. Programs document their effectiveness as well as plans for improvement/expansion in their annual report. Teaching evaluations are used for each course and are incorporated into annual review plans and formative assessment and performance discussions.

The nature of art and design pedagogy includes robust formative assessment as students develop skills in their chosen discipline or medium. All programs at MICA are expected to be engaged in summative assessment of student learning relative to the program's learning outcomes (PLOs) on an annual basis, using direct evidence of student learning when appropriate. In addition to assessments of student learning, programs use student retention data, student surveys, course evaluations, and faculty reviews to evaluate the effectiveness of the program. Programs document their effectiveness as well as plans for improvement/expansion in their annual report.

In addition to the reviews that occur annually, all degree programs at MICA participate in formal Academic Program Review (APR) every five to eight years. The APR process, which includes a site-visit from one or more external reviewers, follows an established set of procedures and guidelines for the analysis of program context (role, curriculum, and learning outcomes); staffing and enrollment; resources (fiscal, facilities, and equipment); vision for the future; and measures of success.

N. Consistency with the State's Minority Student Achievement Goals

(as outlined in COMAR 13B.02.03.05).

1. **Discuss how the proposed program addresses minority student access & success, and the institution's cultural diversity goals and initiatives.**

For the new MPS in Game Design program and across the College, recruitment of diverse students is a priority. In an effort to attract qualified applicants who represent diverse experiences, cultures, ethnicities, and socio-economic backgrounds, the College seeks to increase admissions outreach and the availability of scholarships and financial aid for both new and returning students who represent underserved populations. Recruitment for the new MPS in Game Design targets the local urban and regional areas, and applications that represent cultural, racial, ethnic diversity receive focused support and attention as part of the admission process. In addition, recruitment events and activities engage current students who represent various racial, ethnic, cultural, religious, and economic backgrounds in an effort to mentor culturally diverse students and under-served populations through the application process.

O. Relationship to Low Productivity Programs Identified by the Commission:

1. **If the proposed program is directly related to an identified low productivity program, discuss how the fiscal resources (including faculty, administration, library resources and general operating expenses) may be redistributed to this program.**

Not Applicable

P. Adequacy of Distance Education Programs (as outlined in COMAR 13B.02.03.22)

1. **Provide affirmation and any appropriate evidence that the institution is eligible to provide Distance Education.**
2. **Provide assurance and any appropriate evidence that the institution complies with the C-RAC guidelines, particularly as it relates to the proposed program.**

MICA has been designated by the MHEC and MSCHE as eligible to provide distance education. The College currently offers three fully online programs and offers online courses in several of its other programs. The development, rigor, implementation, integrity, evaluation, and governance of MICA's distance education programs follow C-RAC guidelines. In addition, MICA is a participant in State Authorization Reciprocity Agreement (SARA), an agreement among member states that establishes comparable national standards for interstate offering of postsecondary distance education courses and programs.

Appendix I

Course Descriptions and Course Learning Outcomes are located in Appendix I.

Foundational Core (9 Credits)

Applied Game Theory for Designers (3 cr)

Summary:

Explores the principles of play, motivation, and systems thinking as the foundation of game design. Students examine how meaning, emotion, and engagement emerge through mechanics and player experience.

Detailed Description:

This course introduces graduate students to the advanced study of play and interactive systems through theory, critique, and applied exercises. Students analyze the historical, cultural, and psychological dimensions of games to understand how rules, goals, and mechanics produce meaningful play. Through small-scale analog and digital prototypes, learners test and refine concepts of player agency, feedback, and flow.

Course Learning Outcomes:

1. Analyze games as formal systems integrating rules, goals, and player experience.
2. Evaluate how design choices shape emotion, engagement, and meaning.
3. Apply theories of play and motivation to prototype experiences.
4. Critically assess games from cultural and ethical perspectives.
5. Communicate analytical and creative insights through visual and written critique.
6. Demonstrate iterative experimentation as a method of discovery.

Game Systems, Mechanics & Prototyping (3 cr)

Summary:

Students gain technical fluency in the design and balancing of interactive systems. Through rapid prototyping, they explore how mechanical design and player feedback shape dynamic experiences.

Detailed Description:

This studio-intensive course focuses on the translation of design theory into interactive systems. Students prototype mechanics, feedback loops, and progression systems using industry-standard engines and tools. Emphasis is placed on playtesting, usability analysis, and refining gameplay through iteration. The course bridges creative ideation and technical execution, preparing students for advanced system-level design work.

Course Learning Outcomes:

1. Construct functional prototypes that demonstrate core gameplay mechanics.
2. Apply balancing and pacing principles to enhance player engagement.
3. Implement iterative design methods informed by playtesting data.
4. Integrate technical and creative workflows in prototype development.
5. Document system logic and design rationale using professional standards.

6. Revise interactive systems based on player experience.

Narrative, Character & Worldbuilding for Games (3 cr)

Summary:

Examines narrative design as an essential component of interactive experience. Students create worlds, characters, and story architectures that integrate meaningfully with play.

Detailed Description:

This course explores storytelling techniques for digital and interactive media, emphasizing environmental storytelling, branching narrative, and player-driven character arcs. Students analyze narrative systems in diverse genres and create design documents articulating story, gameplay, and world logic. The course concludes with a narrative prototype that demonstrates how story structure enhances immersion and agency.

Course Learning Outcomes:

1. Apply narrative theory to game design and player experience.
2. Develop cohesive characters, settings, and story frameworks.
3. Design narrative systems that interact dynamically with gameplay.
4. Employ environmental storytelling and visual narrative techniques.
5. Produce a narrative design document integrating mechanics and story.
6. Evaluate narrative coherence and emotional resonance through critique.

Track 1: Visual Design & Art Direction (12 Credits)

Generative 3D Assets for Game Design (3 cr)

Summary:

In a saturated media communications environment where visuals drive perception, this course develops expertise in applying the power of art direction as a strategic tool for shaping narrative, identity, and influence.

Detailed Description:

Students will develop the practice of art direction for total design—bringing together concepts, considerations of virtual and physical space, visual elements, and movement to create cohesive promotional ecosystems across multiple platforms. Through case studies and creative projects, students will deepen their understanding of audience psychology, integrative design, and cross-platform storytelling. Assignments address real-world applications—from cultural events to product launches—with critical reflection on aesthetics, ethics, and representation in visual promotion. Students will produce a ready-to-launch campaign plan and gain fluency in the language of influence through art direction.

Course Learning Outcomes:

1. Explain the entire 2D - 3D asset creation process, from concept development to final render.
2. Apply Technical Skills for Market-Ready Assets

3. Develop high-quality 3D models, textures, and scenes that meet industry standards for games and digital media.
4. Use industry software tools (e.g., Blender, ZBrush, Substance Painter, Unreal Engine) to create technically clean, production-ready assets.
5. Identify which AI tools are suitable for pre-production and asset ideation, and where manual artistic control is essential.
6. Demonstrate the ability to select and apply relevant AI tools (e.g., image generators, 3D block-out AI, auto-texture systems) to optimize early-stage workflows.
7. Demonstrate a strong sense of artistic intent, quality control, and narrative vision when working with AI-assisted tools.

Visual Storytelling & Virtual Environments (3 cr)

Summary:

Examines how composition, lighting, and atmosphere convey narrative in visual design. Students design interactive spaces that communicate story through art direction.

Detailed Description:

Students explore the relationship between environment design and player experience. Using spatial composition and lighting theory, they build environments that express mood, tone, and narrative context. The course emphasizes iterative critique and integrates 3D environments with gameplay considerations.

Course Learning Outcomes:

1. Design immersive environments that communicate narrative intent.
2. Apply lighting and composition techniques for visual storytelling.
3. Develop environmental assets consistent with stylistic goals.
4. Evaluate how spatial layout affects player perception.
5. Integrate environmental design within production pipelines.
6. Document and present a cohesive visual environment prototype.

Style Guides & Art Direction for Games (3 cr)

Summary:

Students learn to define and manage the visual identity of a game project. Emphasizes the development of style guides and art direction strategies for collaborative production.

Detailed Description:

This course explores visual coherence as a leadership practice. Students establish aesthetic principles, color palettes, interface conventions, and animation direction for fictional projects. They create professional art bibles and manage feedback processes typical of studio workflows.

Course Learning Outcomes:

1. Develop visual style guides articulating tone, color, and design language.
2. Direct visual consistency across assets, interfaces, and animation.
3. Apply branding and audience considerations to visual strategy.

4. Lead collaborative critique, feedback sessions, and production processes.
5. Synthesize concept art into cohesive production standards.
6. Present and defend art direction decisions professionally.

Track 2: Game Design & Interactive Systems (12 Credits)

Systems Design & Gameplay (3 cr)

Summary:

Focuses on systemic design as the foundation of emergent play. Students construct dynamic rule systems that promote player agency and unpredictability.

Detailed Description:

This course introduces advanced systems thinking for game designers. Through prototyping and simulation, students explore how rule interactions create emergent complexity. Topics include feedback systems, player behavior modeling, and adaptive challenge.

Course Learning Outcomes:

1. Design interdependent game systems encouraging emergent behavior.
2. Analyze systemic balance and feedback loops in gameplay.
3. Prototype and evaluate emergent play dynamics.
4. Use analytical tools to assess player interaction data.
5. Document system logic for collaborative production.
6. Demonstrate mastery of systemic thinking through original design.

Level Design & Interaction Architecture (3 cr)

Summary:

Explores spatial design, pacing, and player navigation. Students build interactive environments that guide experience and maintain engagement.

Detailed Description:

Students learn to design levels and spaces that support gameplay, narrative, and flow. The course covers layout theory, gating, and feedback systems that shape player progression. Learners develop a playable level demonstrating environmental logic and player agency.

Course Learning Outcomes:

1. Create level layouts integrating gameplay and story objectives.
2. Apply pacing and difficulty curves to maintain engagement.
3. Evaluate spatial flow and visibility for usability.
4. Implement interaction architecture using engine tools.
5. Lead playtests to refine level structure.
6. Produce documentation and visual maps communicating design intent.

Procedural & Generative Design Tools (3 cr)

Summary:

Introduces algorithmic and AI-driven design processes for content generation. Students experiment with procedural systems to expand design efficiency and creativity.

Detailed Description:

This course explores how generative logic can create dynamic, replayable experiences. Students implement procedural tools for terrain, narrative, or gameplay generation. Discussions include ethics and authorship in AI-mediated design.

Course Learning Outcomes:

1. Apply procedural algorithms to automate content generation.
2. Integrate generative systems into existing design pipelines.
3. Analyze the creative and ethical implications of algorithmic design.
4. Evaluate the balance between human authorship and procedural output.
5. Prototype generative features that enhance replayability.
6. Present a functional procedural design prototype.

Track 3: Gamification, Learning & Applied Game Design (12 Credits)

Principles of Gamification & Behavioral Design (3 cr)

Summary:

Explores the psychology of motivation and engagement through game mechanics. Students design gamified systems that ethically influence behavior and learning.

Detailed Description:

Students examine intrinsic and extrinsic motivation, feedback loops, and player typologies. The course connects behavioral science with ethical design to create systems that promote learning, wellness, and positive engagement.

Course Learning Outcomes:

1. Analyze motivational psychology as it applies to game design.
2. Apply gamification techniques to non-entertainment contexts.
3. Evaluate ethical implications of behavioral influence.
4. Prototype systems demonstrating user engagement mechanics.
5. Communicate gamification strategies through professional documentation.

Game Design for Learning, Health & Social Impact (3 cr)

Summary:

Applies game design to education, wellness, and civic engagement. Students explore serious games and design prototypes for positive social impact.

Detailed Description:

Through research and practice, students design interactive experiences that inform, teach, or motivate. The course includes user analysis, accessibility, and assessment of learning outcomes. Students deliver a prototype addressing a real-world issue.

Course Learning Outcomes:

1. Apply design thinking to education, health, or social challenges.
2. Design games aligned with measurable learning outcomes.
3. Evaluate accessibility and inclusivity in gameplay.
4. Lead user testing and analyze engagement data.
5. Present a working prototype and impact evaluation plan.

Experience Systems & Data-Driven Design (3 cr)

Summary:

Investigates adaptive systems and analytics in interactive experience design. Students use data insights to refine engagement and learning outcomes.

Detailed Description:

Students learn to implement player feedback loops, adaptive difficulty, and analytics dashboards to measure performance. The course emphasizes data-informed design and ethical data use in creative systems.

Course Learning Outcomes:

1. Apply analytics to evaluate player engagement and learning.
2. Integrate adaptive design techniques into interactive systems.
3. Use data visualization to communicate player behavior insights.
4. Lead ethical considerations and decisions regarding data collection and personalization.
5. Present a data-driven design refinement plan.

Professional Electives (6 Credits)

Micro-Elective Modules (1-3 cr each)

Rotating topics include:

- Emerging Game Technologies (AI, AR, XR)
- Advanced Script Writing for Games
- Sound Design & Audio Production
- Ethics and Diversity in Game Design
- UI/UX Optimization for Player Experience
- Indie Game Publishing & Crowdfunding
- Playtesting & Usability Methods

- Game Production & Agile Pipelines (3 cr)
- Managing Creative Teams & Communication (3 cr)
- Business of Games & Market Strategy (3 cr)
- Game Educator Seminar: Teaching Game Design

Course Learning Outcomes (per module):

1. Demonstrate focused skill development in the chosen topic.
2. Apply the module's tools or methods in a small-scale project.
3. Reflect on how new knowledge enhances professional practice.

Game Industry Residency & Conference (1 cr)

Summary:

Immersive professional residency centered on engagement with the game industry through events such as GDC or IndieCade.

Detailed Description:

Students attend a major professional conference or residency experience, conduct research on emerging trends, and network with industry peers. A reflective report connects learning outcomes to personal career goals and industry practices.

Course Learning Outcomes:

1. Analyze current industry trends and technologies.
2. Develop professional networks and mentorship connections.
3. Document insights connecting creative practice to market realities.
4. Reflect on professional identity and career trajectory.

Capstone Sequence (6 Credits)

Game Studio I: Concept & Pre-Production (3 cr)

Summary:

The first phase of the capstone sequence focuses on concept development, research, and pre-production planning. Students create a formal Game Design Document and prototype plan.

Detailed Description:

Students synthesize prior learning to propose an original game or interactive experience. Activities include feasibility analysis, production scheduling, early usability testing, and documentation. Faculty and mentors provide milestone feedback.

Course Learning Outcomes:

1. Develop a complete Game Design Document articulating scope and goals.
2. Conduct pre-production research and concept validation.
3. Produce a gray-box prototype for early feedback.
4. Plan and lead production schedules, budgets, and pipelines.
5. Present the project proposal to faculty review.

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Game Studio II: Production & Launch (3 cr)

Summary:

Completes the capstone project through full development, testing, and professional presentation.

Detailed Description:

Students finalize their interactive product, integrating design, art, and production pipelines. The course concludes with usability testing, polish, and public presentation. Deliverables include a playable prototype, marketing deck, and reflective analysis.

Course Learning Outcomes:

1. Implement a functional, playable prototype.
2. Conduct usability testing and QA for balance and polish.
3. Integrate narrative, art, and systems into a cohesive design.
4. Deliver a professional presentation and portfolio package.
5. Reflect critically on the design process and learning outcomes

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