

GAME EDUCATIONS IN THE CONTEXT OF A DANISH GAMES INSTITUTE

The Danish Games Industry has seen years of unparalleled economic success. However, game development does not currently enjoy the kind of political and economic support that other entertainment industries in Denmark do. That situation is set to change thanks to the creation of the Danish Games Institute, an initiative spearheaded by the industry and the Ministry of Culture. The modest but not insignificant funding allocated for the institute can start the groundwork for accelerating the continuous, sustainable growth of the local industry.

The Danish Games Institute should be a catalyst for the Danish Game Industry to grow and to meet the success of other Nordic Countries like Sweden or Finland. Furthermore, the Institute can help consolidate the leading role of digital entertainment in the cultural and educational sectors. While the Danish Games Industry is acknowledged worldwide for the high quality of its products, the time has come to support that acknowledgement and use it as the foundation for the future of the Industry.

The Danish Games Industry relies on a steady feed of forward-looking and skilled graduates from a range of Danish educational institutes. We at ITU take pride in seeing our graduates in all levels of positions in the local games companies. The new focus on the games industry brings unique opportunities and challenges for game educations such as ours at the ITU. Denmark has historically been at the forefront of educating people in the art and craft of making games. The IT University's game program, which turns 20 years in 2025, was a European pioneer in the field. Throughout these decades, we have seen the rise of new distribution platforms, technical tools, development methods, and cultural discourses, and have adapted our education to the fast-changing nature of the industry through our focus on research-based teaching, and close collaboration with the local industry.

We are well aware that the Danish Games Industry, like so many other IT sectors in Denmark, is still in need of skilled talent. That's why the ITU and its MSc in Games program support the creation of Bachelor educations on game design and development in Denmark. We understand that some of the practical skills required by the game industry can be met by an education that introduces students to the tools and workflows that are dominant in the industry now.



A bachelor education in game development will cover a clear gap in the labor market, and can provide people with the skills needed for their immediate employment. At the Games program, we look forward to seeing graduates from those bachelor educations advancing their capacities to work in the industry by joining our program immediately or later after graduation.

We believe that a sustainable Danish Games Industry needs MSc programs like Games. While learning craft skills is critical for immediate employability, a research-based education can contribute to long careers, and the flourishing and diverse ecology of companies that can constitute a strong and sustainable Danish Games Industry.

In 2023, the global games industry suffered layoffs and studio closings that affected an estimated 7000 people worldwide. Like in many creative industries, job security is not a part of the standard working conditions. The Games program at the ITU can proudly attest that the unemployment of graduates after 10 years is 0%. We educate people for long and rewarding careers, identifying the needs of the now, but also teaching how to deal with the challenges of the future. Due to the broad scope of topics and critical perspective, our graduates can adjust to industry changes and efficiently learn new competencies. Our graduates are prepared to start their businesses and think ahead.

We understand the need for immediately employable graduates – that’s why we collaborate closely with Danish and international companies through our employers’ panel, company collaborations, research collaborations, guest speakers, and initiatives that address the immediate needs of our students such as in relation to mentorship and CV building. At the same time, we acknowledge that Denmark needs a bachelor education that can provide companies with immediately useful skills. We fully support the initiatives that the Danish Game Institute and other stakeholders are taking with an aim to build and kickstart these programs.

At the Games program, we will continue our mission of educating graduates who can be part of the broader higher education landscape in Denmark, accepting graduates from other educations who want to know more about games, as well as supporting students who complement their competence profile with courses from any other university in Denmark, and even abroad.

The Games program sees the Games Industry not only as game producers, but also as software developers, political stakeholders, cultural opinion makers, and educational institutions. We thus respect our graduates’ viewpoint where the games industry expands well beyond de facto ‘computer game’ product development and into the various applications of playful and playable experiences in all areas of people’s lives today. Games are an integral part of Danish culture and society, and they demand from us forward-thinking educations, capable of shaping the industry of the future. The games program

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offers more than just skills: it allows graduates to understand the role of games and play in technology development, in culture, and in society. Whether addressing issues of addiction, future technology development, or diversity, games education needs to provide students with a wide array of skills that allow them to navigate their careers. We recognize our advantage as a research institution in providing such contextualization through teaching conducted by teachers with an active research practice in games and their making. Seeing research and teaching intertwined is also the reason why this statement is co-written by the heads of both our research center and of our study programme.

Denmark is a uniquely rich country when it comes to games and their culture. A healthy and growing games industry is coupled with a serious research and education environment. While the size of the Danish game industry may be smaller than that of its neighbors, it has managed to develop a set of uniquely Danish values that make the Danish game industry thrive in the global game scene. Games researchers who engage in public discourse by sharing research insights that ground public opinion and decision-making serve the healthy development of the games industry. At ITU, we have been spearheading academic games research for as long as it has existed as an area of research.

The establishment of a Danish Games Institute is an acknowledgement of the importance of games in Danish business and culture. Supporting this industry through the creation of new educational offerings that complement the already existing programs would address the urgent needs of the present, while also making sure that sustainability is part of the core values of the Danish Games Industry. Through research-based teaching and close collaboration with industry partners, the Games program at the ITU has been a part of this industry for the last 20 years and looks forward to contributing to these exciting future developments. We embrace our current partnerships and look forward to working even closer with the upcoming and future partners in education and industry. Games are the most impactful cultural products today and we should take great care and pleasure in how we create them and make sense of them.

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