

## Details

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## Software

### Engines:

- Unreal Engine (Blueprint)
- Unity

### Design Tools:

- Photoshop, Illustrator
- Maya, Substance Painter

### Production Tools:

- Trello, Miro, Jira
- Microsoft 365 Suite

## Design Skills

- Level Design
- Gameplay & System Design
- Prototyping & Iteration
- Agile Scrum Workflows
- User Experience (UX) Design
- QA & Playtesting
- Team Collaboration

## Awards/Highlights

- EA Playdemic Mentorship
- Limit Break Mentorship
- EGX, MCM Showcase
- Team of the Week ×3
- Best Overall Game ×2
- Best Mechanical Showcase

## Education

BSc (Hons) **Games Design**

Manchester Metropolitan  
University

2023 – 2026 (Expected)

(First-Class standing)

# Thurston Wells

I'm a Game Designer in my final year at Manchester Metropolitan University, on track for a first-class degree, with experience across both professional and simulated studio environments. My focus areas include level, gameplay, and systems design, and I'm seeking a role in the games industry where I can continue growing as a designer.

## Experience

### Professional Experience

#### QA, Playtesting & Design Support

Rethinkly | May 2023 – August 2025

- Conduct **structured QA and playtesting** on a live **Unity-based** sandbox game, documenting and reporting issues across versions.
- Contribute to design-focused tasks, such as **tutorial planning** and minor system design discussions, as part of an evolving role beyond QA.
- Designed and prototyped a skybox switching system in Unity, improving player experience and **reducing transition time by ~85%**.
- Regularly use **Microsoft 365 Suite, Miro, and Zoom** for documentation, task tracking, and cross-functional team collaboration.

### Academic Projects

Manchester Metropolitan University

#### Design Lead, Level Designer & Game Designer

CheddarCat | Hellcaster | Sep 2025 – Jan 2026

- Worked in a **12-person multidisciplinary team** within a **simulated studio**, using **Unity, Jira, GitHub**, and **agile sprint workflows**.
- **Maintained design focus** across weekly sprints, helping **manage scope**, prioritisation, and mechanic iteration through documentation, feedback, and flow planning.
- Designed and implemented all **8 final-build levels**, completing blockout, polish, lighting, and optimisation through iterative playtesting.
- Implemented level transitions, encounters, and challenge rooms **using team-developed systems**.
- Contributed to the project's public showcase at **EGX, MCM Comic Con**, with the team receiving multiple **Team of the Week** awards.

#### Level Designer, Game Designer & System Designer

Environment & Level Design | **Ashen: DLC** | Sep 2024 – Jan 2025

- Designed two levels in **Unreal Engine 5**, as DLC for an existing game.
- Applied **game, level, and system design** principles to recreate mechanics and match the source game's tone, pacing, and visual style.
- **Developed playable blockouts** with lighting, material detail, and props, iterated based on player feedback from structured playtests.
- Delivered a **design breakdown** through an **edited video analysis** and **live playthrough**, along with a critical design analysis of a peer's level.
- **Received a grade of 97.3%**, with tutor feedback describing the work as "**exceptional... nearly flawless**," citing polish, clarity of design theory, and thoughtful iteration.

## Academic Projects

### Game Designer & Data Analyst

#### Games Players and Data | Sep – Dec 2024

- **Analysed gameplay telemetry** to **evaluate** how effectively *Colour Rush* **promoted cooperative play**.
- Used **heatmaps, Excel-based statistical analysis, chi-squared testing, and Pearson's r correlations** to investigate **relationships between level design, score disparity, and player behaviour**.
- Used **DEQ emotion-tracking data** to identify links between score disparity and negative player emotions such as anger and sadness, highlighting where competitive incentives undermined cooperation.
- **Produced design-led conclusions and recommendations to improve cooperative play**, including redesigning scoring and drop-off systems to align player objectives better.
- Received **95%**, with tutor feedback praising the work's analytical depth, clarity, and design-led conclusions.

### Team Lead, Level Designer & Game Designer

#### Co-Lab 3 | NIGHTMARE | Sep – Dec 2024

- **Led a 5-person interdisciplinary team**, coordinating tasks and guiding the overall creative direction.
- Consolidated all levels into a single **Unreal Engine 5** build using **GitHub**, managing flow integration.
- Designed one core level and contributed to others, including alternate hub areas and the final sequence.
- **Contributed over 50%** of the final portfolio, including design documentation and presentation slides.
- Received **95%**, with tutor feedback commending design thinking, organisation, and critical reflection.

### Game Designer & Game Developer

#### Rapid Game Prototyping: Game a Week | Jan – April 2025

- **Designed and developed** six individual game prototypes, each **completed in a one-week sprint** constrained by different themes.
- Received two **Best Overall Game** awards and one **Best Mechanical Showcase** across three weeks.
- Explored a wide **range of mechanics** and genres, **iterating designs** based on tutor and peer feedback.
- Received **82%** with feedback highlighting technical execution, design creativity, and breadth of mechanics.

## Independent Projects

### Game Designer & Game Developer

#### GMTK Game Jam – Loop | Tenure | 2025 July | 3 Days

- Worked in a **5-person team** to develop a **Unity-based** simulation game about being trapped in a loop, creating endless sequels for a video game franchise.
- **Designed and implemented** minigames with difficulty and variation within a simulated desktop environment, **using team-built tools** for seamless gameplay integration.
- Strengthened my understanding of **scope management and rapid iteration** within a **fast-paced collaborative development environment**.

#### Global Game Jam – Mask | Music Mask | 2026 Jan | 48 hours

- Built a small game in **Unreal Engine** centred on sound, follow-the-leader mechanics, and location avoidance.
- **Managed scope** tightly to ensure a working, **playable submission was completed** within the jam deadline.

## References

David Littlewood

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Direct supervisor at ProReal

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Academic supervisor across project modules