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Priorities Addressed:

Digital transformation//Inclusion and diversity//Other

2

Description

Unlock the world of cultural heritage preservation through video games!

Join our program to delve into UNESCO's definition of cultural heritage, embracing both tangible and intangible treasures of societies worldwide and our own specific local context. Discover how video games serve as powerful tools to document, celebrate, and protect diverse cultural legacies, engaging audiences and promoting intercultural understanding. Throughout the program, you'll learn to craft immersive experiences that showcase local heritage, from design and development to prototyping and iteration. Embark on a journey to build a holistic vision of preserving cultural heritage in the digital age!

General Objectives

- **Definitions of Heritage**
 - Framework for understanding heritage in the context of the course
- **Historical Accuracy and Context**
 - Accurate Representation: Immersion in historically accurate depictions
 - Contextual Information: Providing deeper historical understanding through facts and artifacts
 - Authenticity: Understanding and recognizing counterfactual play and artifact significance
- **Cultural Understanding**
 - Showcasing cultural traditions, rituals, folklore, and art forms
 - Integrating local languages and symbols for basic language learning
- **Multicultural Working Environment**
 - Virtual cooperation for online and remote collaborative work
 - Multicultural collaboration dynamics

Host
**Bragança
Polytechnic
University**

[6 ECTS]

Blended
Intensive
Programme in
**Heritage in
Videogames**



Focus on Game Design & Development objectives

- **Promote Interactivity with Artifacts**
 - Simulations for examining historical artifacts and deciphering inscriptions
 - Virtual museum exhibits showcasing artifacts, historical documents, and multimedia presentations
- **Use Storytelling and Narrative**
 - Developing compelling historical narratives that engage players emotionally
 - Introducing branching narratives to explore different historical outcomes
- **Promote Reflection and Analysis**
 - Designing reflection spaces for contemplation and engagement with historical accounts
- **Co-op Gameplay Possibilities**
 - Incorporating multiplayer features to encourage collaboration, communication, and shared heritage-based activities

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Methods and outcomes

Throughout the course, a variety of learning approaches will be employed to cultivate practical design skills, critical thinking, and a deep understanding of the end-to-end game design and development process. Central to the curriculum is a strong emphasis on design methodologies, encouraging students to move beyond abstract concepts and engage with real-world challenges through iterative creation.

Students will explore real-world case studies drawn from diverse geographic, social, and historical contexts. These studies provide critical insights into local heritage, allowing students to identify and integrate meaningful narratives into their game concepts. Understanding existing practices and interpreting heritage within different cultural frameworks will ground students' design choices in authenticity and relevance.

Coordination

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A key element of the learning process is the experimental approach to materials and objects, which supports hands-on exploration of object properties and behaviors. This tactile engagement sharpens students' ability to translate physical qualities into meaningful virtual representations while maintaining a balance between creative interpretation and historical accuracy.

The curriculum places strong emphasis on the design process as a cycle of ideation, prototyping, testing, and refinement. Students will be guided through structured stages of design thinking—from research and conceptual development to wireframing, gameplay mechanics, and narrative integration. Prototypes will evolve through multiple iterations, with feedback loops built in to promote reflection, troubleshooting, and creative problem-solving.

This project-based, iterative development model fosters a mindset of continuous improvement. Students will routinely critique their own work and that of their peers, integrating feedback into subsequent design phases. They will be encouraged to challenge assumptions, assess usability, and consider broader social, ethical, and environmental implications of their designs.

To reinforce user-centered design principles, students will examine case studies that analyze audience engagement and feedback in heritage-based games and interactive experiences. This insight will inform how they craft player experiences and narrative delivery. The course culminates in a public exhibition of student projects, offering an opportunity to present game prototypes. This final stage emphasizes the importance of effective communication, audience interaction, and the ability to clearly articulate design decisions.

Ultimately, students will gain a comprehensive understanding of the game design process, from early ideation through to execution and evaluation. They will develop the ability to design culturally rooted, engaging games that are both critically informed and technically sound, using prototyping and feedback as core tools for innovation and refinement. Therefore, applying active methodologies, the course is structured in the following steps:



• MULTICULTURAL COLLABORATIVE WORK FRAMEWORK

UNDERSTANDING: building and applying social and emotional skills and strategies for culturally responsive team dynamics, overview of project management;

• **HERITAGE FRAMEWORK UNDERSTANDING:** assigned readings analysis; individual observation; individual investigation, study users experience, document findings;

• **TEAM ENGAGEMENT:** (students, facilitator, partners): get familiar with team members, define case exploring the context, identify stakeholders and list all, field work preparation, set up meetings & tools for project management;

• **IDEATE:** identify insights; understand the stakeholders; grow common understanding; generate solutions; present Executive Summary to external partner;

• **VALIDATE:** validation by peers, validation by experts, review of the requirements, debate Minimum Value Proposition to external partner;

• **DESIGN AND ITERATE:** improve / develop solutions, test and validate until final state, document design & development cycle;

• **DEMONSTRATE:** prototyping the solution(s); feedback gathering (peers, experts, mentors, users); Final Pitch preparation.



4**Field of Education (ISCED study area)**

048 Inter-disciplinary programme

5**Level of Study**

Bachelor's (EQF 6) // Master's (EQF 7)

6**Virtual Component description and duration**

Online active methodologies, based in lean design, design thinking and end to end problem design, based in game design and development iterative cycles. Students will work in teams +/- 6 elements from different countries, with active facilitation from teachers and common events with check points and expert feedback and support.

Duration of 22 hours.

7**Presential Component Duration (days) and location (venue)**

Duration of 5 days in Mirandela (Portugal).

8**Timeline**

Student Application: until 10/09/2025

Link to the form:

<https://ipb.pt/en/internationalization/erasmus/blended-intensive-programmes-bip>

Student Selection: until 12/09/2025

Students' Communication of Results: 12/09/2025 (by email)

Enrolment on BIP's Discord server: until 13/10/2025

Online Work (6 hours): 06/10/2025 – 31/10/2025

Presential week (26 hours): 03/11/2025 – 07/11/2025

Online Work (16 hours): 10/11/2025 – 16/01/2026



WEEK	MODE	PHASE	OBJECTIVES	DELIVERABLES
#1 (13.10.2025) Kick-off (2h)	[Synchronous] All students Online + [Flipped classroom (individual)]	Multicultural collaborative work framework understanding	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Practical issues Self-assessment 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Shared bio Quizz
#2 (20.10.2025) (2h)	[Synchronous] All students Online + [Flipped classroom (individual)]	Heritage framework understanding	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Understanding heritage in the context of the course Fundamental concepts (context, representation, authenticity) Individual observation and research 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Analysis and research canvas Quizz
#3 (27.10.2025) (2h)	[Synchronous] Per team Online + [Individual work]	Team Engagement Context Engagement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Get familiar with student team Explore case context Identify stakeholders Field preparation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Team canvas Context canvas Stakeholders canvas
#5 (3.11.2025) F2F week	All students @ Mirandela	Ideate Validate Design & iterate	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identify insights Understand the stakeholders Generate solutions Executive summary peer validation Cultural experiences Further solutions - prototype Improve / develop solutions (validate with experts) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Executive summary Two pager with solutions and value proposition 1st prototype
#6 (10.11.2025) (2h)	[Synchronous] Per team Online + [Team & Individual work]	Design & iterate	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Improve / develop solutions Prototype iteration 	
#7 (17.11.2025) (2h)	[Synchronous] Per team Online + [Team & Individual work]	Design & iterate	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Improve / develop solutions Prototype iteration 	
#8 (24.11.2025) (2h)	[Synchronous] All students Online + [Team & Individual work]	Design & iterate	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Improve / develop solutions Prototype iteration 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Mid-report presentation (documentation of design and development so far; prototype evolution)
#9 (2.12.2025) (2h)	[Synchronous] Per team Online + [Team & Individual work]	Design & iterate	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Improve / develop solutions Prototype iteration 	
#10 (9.12.2025) (2h)	[Synchronous] All students Online + [Team & Individual work]	Demonstrate	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Playtesting – feedback gathering (peers, experts, mentors, users) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Evolved prototype Playtesting report
#11 (15.12.2025) (2h)	[Synchronous] Per team Online + [Team & Individual work]	Design & iterate	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Improve / develop solutions Prototype iteration 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Poster & project communication (to prepare final pitch)
(5.01.2026) (2h)	Deadline for publication [TBD]	Demonstrate	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Final Pitch 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Final prototype Publication (platform TBD)
(12.01.2026) (2h)	[Asynchronous] All students Assessment	Self-assessment + Internal evaluation + External evaluation		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Portfolio with all information, canvas and templates filled in the process, as well as the prototype. Final meeting with external partner.

