Be Inspired. Be Creative. Be NEXT.

Ubisoft Toronto NEXT is an annual competition designed to showcase the talent of video game development students in Ontario. Kick-start your career in the industry with a paid apprenticeship and spend the summer learning from the Ubisoft Toronto studio's top talent.

Compete in one of seven disciplines to win an apprenticeship:
- o 3D Art (Modelling)
- o Animation
- o Concept Art
- o Level Design
- o Programming
- o Technical Art
- o User Interface

Last year, 13 students made the transition from student to game developer at Ubisoft Toronto through this program. **Are you next?**

<u>**Eligibility**</u>
- Currently attend <u>OR</u> have graduated from an Ontario post-secondary school no earlier than Spring 2018
- Are Ontario students or recent graduates with less than 2 years of professional experience in game development
- You must reside in Ontario
- Be eligible to work in Canada
- This challenge must be done individually. Team-based submissions will not be reviewed.

<u>**Ubisoft Toronto NEXT: Animation Apprentice Competition**</u>

Participants have the choice to create an animation using one of the provided **cinematic** scenes <u>**OR**</u> to create an animation sequence using one of the two **gameplay** actions outlined below.

The cinematic scene must be no more than 15 seconds long and the Gameplay scenario at least 4-10 seconds long. Both animations must be 3D CG. Participants may use an already rigged character, but the character must be biped in form. Participants may use any software package.

<u>**Cinematic Option:**</u> (Pick one of the following as your scene)

Create a 10-15 second animation based on one of the following two scenarios.

1. **A character is waiting in a room for something or someone.**
   - Animate a character waiting in a room. You are in charge of the context of this scene.

2. **A character discovers/explores a new space or environment.**
   - Create an animation of a character entering a room, a building, outdoor space, or environment.

<u>Thinking Points when creating your scene:</u>

- Where is this location and what type of environment are they walking into?
- What is the mood or atmosphere of the scene?
- What is their initial emotional state and how does it change during the scene?
- Who/What is the character waiting for?
- What do they see, hear, smell, etc.?

<u>**Gameplay Action:**</u> (Pick from one of the following, must use a biped rig)

Create a 4-10 second animation based on one of the following two scenarios.

1. **Stealth takedown.**
   - Create a takedown against an unaware victim. It can be in motion or in cover. Victim must be incapacitated at the end of the animation using lethal or non-lethal force. Use of Weapon Props are *optional*.

2. **Traversal Sequence** (3 Obstacle Navigation)
   - Create a traversal sequence using 3 obstacles
     i.e. Running and sliding over a car, climbing up a 3m wall, gap jump from building to building. Identify in your submission what the 3 obstacles are.

<u>Thinking Points when creating your scene:</u>

- Is your main character trained or has amateur skill level in combat and athleticism?
- What is the context of the scene and where is the location?
- What is the emotional state of the character?

Tips:

- Focus on Body Mechanics, Acting, Dynamic Posing, Staging, and Timing/Pacing.
- Choose the right camera that best presents your animation and helps visually tell the story.
- If you want to create a cinematic style camera, make sure it elevates your animation.

- Do rough camera framing at the start then only focus on camera work once you are happy with your polished animation. We are evaluating animation, not camera work.
- Watch video reference that is similar to the action you are going to create.
  - For instance, parkour videos are great for showing weight and energy transfer between different locomotion states. Study it frame by frame.
- Think about your characters' thought process, changes in emotions and body language to help illustrate what they're feeling, and show them reacting to their environment and/or situation.
- Sound effects may be used (Foley and Onomatopoeia, but **no dialogue**).
- Create simple sets or environments.
- If props are helpful to communicate your animation, feel free to use props.

Helpful things to keep in mind:

- Focus on what's important: your animation! Spend the majority of your time polishing it rather than modelling, rigging, texturing, and lighting. The judges are focusing on animation quality rather than a beautifully lit scene with textured characters and environments.
- Be realistic about the time you have! Don't be over-ambitious with your concept. A really short, well-animated piece will demonstrate your animation skill much better than a long piece of animation which is finished but not polished. Remember, quality over quantity. If you can see the mistakes in your piece we will too!
- Get feedback! Show your work and be open to change. If multiple people see the same issues with your piece, chances are those problems are there and need to be addressed. Grappling with your animation problems is the best way to increase your animation skill.
- Use Cameras effectively. Setup and animate your cameras that accentuate the essence of your gameplay animation or allow the audience to focus on the emotion of the scene. It is very easy to sabotage your animation quality with a poorly framed or animated camera. For instance, a very dramatic and subtle facial animation will not be clearly shown from a long shot, nor will a very active complex body mechanic animation be clearly shown from a close up.

Submission Requirements & Documentation

Submit your entry at http://toronto.ubisoft.com/next-submissions/

All items are mandatory
- **Documentation must be in PDF or PowerPoint format;**
- **The entry package must be named as follows:**
  NEXT_2020_Animation_FirstnameLastname.zip

  - Full name;
  - School;
  - Program;
  - Your resume and cover letter;

o   The link to a YouTube video of your submission, minimum resolution of 1080p.

Judging criteria

A panel of expert judges will individually rank the overall entry package, out of 30, based on the following criteria:

Overall Animation Quality and Polish of Entry Package (1-15)
- Good use of the 12 main animation principles
- Attention to detail, believable body mechanics

Creativity and Originality of Entry Package (1-15)
- Be clever, avoid clichés and overacting, but express the desired emotion/intention
- Create original, clear acting and motion choices

Ubisoft Toronto will designate up to five finalists, dependent on the recommendations of the Ubisoft Toronto judging panel. Ubisoft Toronto is the sole judge of this contest and reserves the right to elect the panel as it sees fit; all judgment is final and non-negotiable.

Animation Specifications:

- Shots do not need to be fully rendered, we will only judge animation skill
- Must be Keyframed 3D animation. Motion Capture is not allowed
- Your Cinematic Scene must be 10-15 seconds and Gameplay Action must be 4-10 seconds
- Applicants are allowed to use sound effects to elevate their scene but should not rely on it
- Don't use any overtly offensive content (this is not a place for crude or sexual humour - your entry, if selected, will represent Ubisoft publically)
- Framerate **should** be 30 fps
- Applicants may use any biped rig they are comfortable with
- Extra props are allowed to be added to your scene as you deem necessary
- Only one entry per applicant
- Solo entries only; no teams

If you're having a hard time finding a rig, here are some options that you can look into. Ubisoft Toronto neither endorses nor is associated with any of the following options. Please make sure that you follow all outlined terms & conditions posted by the rig's respective owners and provide accreditation where deemed necessary.

Truong CG Artist: https://gumroad.com/truongcgartist
Various Rigs: http://animationbuffet.blogspot.com/
Meri Rig: http://www.meryproject.com/merydown
Morpheus: http://www.joshburton.com/projects/morpheus.asp
Ray Rig: http://www.cgtarian.com/character-ray/download-character-ray.html

The Stewart Rig: http://www.animationmentor.com/free-maya-rig/
Longer Winter Studios: http://longwintermembers.com/

Key Dates & Deadlines

Want to stay on top of the competition? Sign up for reminders, tips, and important updates at http://toronto.ubisoft.com/next-sign-up/

Submission Deadline: Sunday March 22nd, 2020, 11:59 pm EST
    Submit your entry at http://toronto.ubisoft.com/next-submissions/

Interviews: April 2020
    Selected candidates will be invited to the studio for an apprenticeship interview.

Studio Tour:

    Those who complete a submission by the deadline will be contacted by email with the opportunity to sign-up for a tour of the Ubisoft Toronto studio.

    Note: Tour spots are first-come, first-served and are not guaranteed.

Awards Ceremony: Mid-May 2020 – By Invitation Only

    Finalists will be invited to attend the Ubisoft Toronto NEXT Awards Ceremony in May 2020. We will announce the Grand Prize Winner during this reception, and we will showcase and celebrate the talent of all of the NEXT finalists.

Prizes
- 1st Prize:
    - One (1) paid Animation Apprentice position at Ubisoft Toronto. The Apprentice position shall be for a length of three (3) months at Ubisoft Toronto studio, and is currently scheduled to begin June 1st, 2020. Dates subject to change at the sole discretion of Ubisoft;
    - Display of the 1st Prize Winner's Animation during the Ubisoft Toronto NEXT Awards Ceremony, submitted with his/her submission package ;
    - One Ubisoft prize pack valued at $300.

- Finalist Prizes:
    - Display of each finalist's Animation during the Ubisoft Toronto NEXT Awards Ceremony;
    - One Ubisoft prize pack valued at $300.

Questions?
Email us at NEXT@Ubisoft.com. Note: Email is not monitored 24/7 but we will do our best to respond within 48 hours.