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A Survey of Gender Diverse Students' Experiences with Curricula in Game Design Programs in Scotland

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Aims

This project aims to address the lack of gender-diverse (transgender, non-binary, intersex, gender non-conforming etc.) representation in games design educational programs and their related course materials (e.g. readings, games or films), with the goal of increasing the inclusivity of these programs and therefore the level of engagement and sense of belonging among these students. The overall research question of this work is: *to what extent do gender-diverse students of game design and related subjects feel represented and included in their curricula?*

Methods

An online survey was used to gather information from current game design or related subject's students about their curricula experiences. The survey asked about their experiences in Likert questions and invited free-text responses.

Main Findings

Participant responses generally indicated: a need for more inclusive course materials; a need for more representation of gender-diverse people in games course materials; and that their tutors and lecturers were generally aware of the issues affecting gender diverse students

Negative experiences were reported regarding 3d modelling classes, due to the traditionally gendered nature of discussion around anatomy when teaching character design.

A key theme emerging from responses was that participants' felt a distinct lack of queer diversity as a whole in the games industry and that diverse voices should be platformed in games design education to address this problem from a bottom-up approach.

Next Steps

From this research, the key areas for future work are to: continue to collect data to widen the sample size; investigate how these issues fit into the wider landscape of higher education equality, diversity and inclusion issues; and to engage with public bodies that focus on LGBTQ+ wellbeing in Scotland to address how some of the issues that have arisen can be addressed.