

GAME DEVELOPER WAGES & CONDITIONS

A GUIDE BY GAME WORKERS UNITE AUSTRALIA



INTRODUCTION

Every worker in Australia is entitled to minimum wages and conditions - even game workers!

Anybody creating software (which means all types of game developers, **including designers and artists**) is covered by the *Professional Employees Award*.

In addition, all Australians are entitled to the protections of the National Employment Standards (NES).

This document will help you understand how both the *Award* and the NES apply to you as a game developer.

The wage table to the right, and the entitlements on the next page, apply to anybody working in game development who is an **employee** (that is, *not* an independent contractor).

If you *are* an independent contractor, this data might be helpful when it comes to setting your rates. There is also more information about that on the other side of the page.

DISCLAIMER

This is intended to be a short, readable summary. This means some details have been excluded for readability. If you would like more information, please contact us and we will be happy to help.

If you are in trouble at work, **join your union immediately**. GWU Australia can assist you with this.

Job Description	Minimum Annual Salary (full time)	Minimum Hourly Wage (full time)	Minimum Hourly Wage (casual)
Graduate, with...			
3 year qualification (or equivalent)	\$ 52,399	\$ 26.43	\$ 33.04
4/5 yr qualification (or equivalent)	\$ 53,741	\$ 27.11	\$ 33.89
One year of experience	\$ 54,644	\$ 27.57	\$ 34.46
Two years of experience	\$ 56,919	\$ 28.71	\$ 35.89
Three years of experience	\$ 59,802	\$ 30.17	\$ 37.71
Four years of experience	\$ 61,817	\$ 31.18	\$ 38.98
Senior Role	\$ 67,558	\$ 34.08	\$ 42.60
Lead Role	\$ 76,195	\$ 38.44	\$ 48.05

Figures are current as of 1 November 2020. Figures may change on 1 July 2021.

**EXPERIENCE HAS VALUE.
YOUR WAGE SHOULD INCREASE EVERY YEAR!**

DO I HAVE TO RECEIVE THESE WAGES?

Yes, *or better!* If you are an employee (not a contractor) you cannot be paid less than this, *even if you agreed to it*.

If you have signed an employment agreement with wages lower than this, that agreement is illegal.

If this is happening to you, speak to your union.

SO I NEED A UNIVERSITY DEGREE?

Not at all. The Award allows for different combinations of degrees, diplomas, certificates, and general industry experience.

If you have a TAFE diploma or other qualification, you can still be covered.

GWU Australia can assist you in working out the requirements, so contact us!

ENTITLEMENTS

It's worth thinking about more than just your salary when looking at your job.

You are also entitled to:

- Minimum superannuation of 9.5% (even for casuals)
- Minimum 4 weeks paid annual leave per year (paid at an additional 17.5% of your base rate)
- Ten days paid personal leave (sick leave) per year
- Ten days unpaid personal leave per year
- Unpaid community service leave (on agreement with your employer)
- Protection from unfair dismissal
- Severance pay and redundancy pay
- Twelve months of unpaid parental leave, once you have been working for your employer for a year

PRO TIP: Just like your wages, you and your employer can negotiate for *better* entitlements than these, but these are the legal minimum.

OVERTIME & CRUNCH

If you work more than 38 hours in a week, you must be compensated for it.

Exactly *how* you are compensated is up to you and your employer to agree on, but you *must* be compensated.

Some ways that you could be compensated include:

- Substantially increasing your annual salary to make up for any overtime rates you would otherwise have received
- Giving you a work vehicle, such as a car
- Paying overtime rates (you and your employer should decide on a rate together)
- Paid time off in lieu (TOIL) equal to the amount of overtime worked

YOU HAVE THE RIGHT TO REFUSE UNSAFE WORK!

You have the legal right to refuse overtime if it's "unsafe, unreasonable or excessive". You can not be fired for doing so.

This includes when you are required to care for family members who need you, or if it would be unsafe for you to continue to work.

ARE YOU BEING SHAM CONTRACTED?

Sham contracting is when you are treated like an employee but paid like a contractor. This lets your employer get more out of you, and avoid paying entitlements.

This is illegal. We can help you determine if you are in a sham contracting situation.

CONTRACTOR INFORMATION

Contractors (also called freelancers) are not employees. There are no minimum wages or conditions for contractors, no entitlements, and no protections from bullying, unfair dismissal etc.

Contractors set their own pay rates and invoice (with an ABN) for the work done.

When thinking about your pay rate:

- Start with an ideal annual after-tax figure (use the wage table overleaf as a guide)
- Make sure to include business costs such as gear, web hosting, reference material, or other subscriptions
- Break that down into an hourly rate based on 150-200 working days a year, at 7.5 hours a day

Then, increase that hourly rate by:

- 25% to put aside for sick and holiday pay
- 9.5% to pay into your own superannuation fund

Remember that as a contractor you may need to spend at least one day a week networking or looking for more work opportunities, as well as have enough saved up so that you can attend industry conferences.

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