

DAE MISSION STATEMENT

2025-2026



At Digital Arts and Entertainment, we believe that great professionals are made through hard work and dedication. Our goal is to help you succeed in the world of games, animation, or VFX by offering a curriculum that meets industry standards, while also teaching both technical skills and important teamwork abilities.

We're here to support you, and to build a strong community made up of students, teachers, and industry professionals.

Being part of the DAE community means sharing a love for the digital entertainment industry. It's about being excited to work with others, create amazing projects together, and reach shared goals.

It's also about being part of an inclusive, respectful, and open-minded community. Here, you can be yourself while showing respect and kindness to everyone around you. These are the core values that keep our community strong, and we're excited for you to help us grow even more.

We can't wait to see what you'll achieve.

See you soon!

Regis Le Roy

Academic Director, DAE

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1. INTRODUCTION

DAE is more than just a degree; as you enter our campuses, you become a member of the community – a vibrant, international community that promotes mutual respect and collective growth.

Our community is *for and by* the students – and to the students we pledge our commitment to upholding a campus culture of open-mindedness, inclusivity, acceptance, and connection. Each of us brings a different story to DAE – and we believe that stories are much more dynamic when they are brought together.

We support an inclusive environment – one in which you can be unforgivably yourself. We are fully committed to supporting each of you in realizing your fullest potential inside and outside of the classroom. In response, we ask for your commitment to the following ethical framework – shaped by your fellow students. After all, the Community would not exist without you.

This ethical code – what we like to call our **Mission Statement** – defines what we stand for, together. This Mission Statement also links seamlessly with Howest's core values: **Serve, Empower, Care.**

We additionally include an overview of well-being support routes toward the end of this document, as we believe ethics and well-being are innately intertwined.

This is an invitation to commit, to support, to thrive – together. Ethics isn't just an abstract idea – it's something we can commit to in tangible ways. We look forward to exploring these topics with you – and remember, we're always here to listen.

2. WE BELIEVE IN TALKING ABOUT ETHICS.

What *is* ethics, exactly? What does it *actually* mean for us? Why should we care?

Ethics doesn't exist in a vacuum – it's not a separate or independent entity. Rather, it's intertwined with almost everything we do – there's latent ethical content in the things we say, read, watch, study, etc. Given this, ethics is inevitably part of the culture at DAE.

As a student community, we hold the following to be central to our story: Respect, positivity, passion, and effort.

So – let's talk about ethics. Let's rewrite the narrative that this is a supplementary idea, an afterthought of action. With a focus on prevention, equality, and well-being, we'll bring ethics to life on our campus.

3. WE BELIEVE IN COMMUNITY GUIDELINES

In some courses, teachers start the semester by creating a 'class guideline' together with students. The same happens in every workplace or organization. When different people from varying backgrounds come together, we are bound to experience some kind of confrontation with difference. It can be challenging to assess what might be acceptable behaviour – and what may not be – when we have varying opinions of what we can accept as *good*. Through this document, **we aim to sort through different behavioural situations possibly encountered at DAE, with the main goal of setting guidelines for acceptable behaviour in context.**

We encourage you to see this as **an invitation to demonstrate values in a positive way** – and, in doing so, contributing to the well-being of the greater DAE community.

The [Education and Examination Code \(OER\) of Howest](#) applies to all educational activities at Howest. In addition to providing a logistical framework (including information pertaining to education regulations, the general examination code, special provisions, etc.), the OER outlines behavioural expectations and disciplinary rules of the greater Howest community (**see page 74-79**).

Howest has also launched a [Code of Ethics](#) for students and staff alike. This framework acts to serve as a guide to act with integrity.

When you sign the OER and agree to the Howest Code of Ethics, you agree to a particular set of rules as part of your learning agreement with Howest. All OER frameworks – and the framework of the Howest Code of Ethics – apply to our DAE Community, and to this Mission Statement. Given the distinctive qualities of our student community, we opt to offer additional guidelines.

It is our goal that this Mission Statement actively lives within our community – after all, a document tackling topics of ethics, behaviour, and well-being only truly exists if its contents are reflected through action. It is our aim and our invitation to you to cultivate a Mission Statement that truly *breathes*. This is the section of this document that exists for and by the students of DAE, with a collective mindset toward respect and growth.

As members of the DAE Community, we are called to ask ourselves – what do we stand for? What makes an environment an inclusive one – one that celebrates difference while still finding unity? What standards can we expect each other to uphold in terms of ethical behaviour? What can we expect from each other – and how can we ensure a mutually respectful and supportive environment, both on and offline?

These Community Guidelines are not intended, by any means, exist solely as a list of rules. Rather, the following framework is a positive, additive

one – one that explains who we are as a community. It is an invitation for each person to exhibit values in a positive way – it is not an invitation to punish or an invitation to sanction. **A positive community is only established through a positive lens.**

Our Community Guidelines have been curated (with extensive input from fellow students) in order to build and support a thriving DAE campus.

3.1. RESPECT OF ALL IDENTITIES

We respect everyone as they are – period!

We do not tolerate discrimination and/or hateful speech. No matter your age, gender, sexual orientation, race, ethnicity, religion, or ability status, you are worthy – and will be embraced accordingly as part of the DAE Community.

What we do tolerate: *Respect and acceptance.*

Our students are unique and equally valid. Regarding gender, **we kindly ask you to use others' preferred pronouns** (i.e. She/her/hers, he/him/his, They/Them). By aiming to use correct pronouns, we show the other person that we respect their identity and are committed to an inclusive campus environment.

3.2. BULLYING & HARRASSMENT: NO TOLERANCE POLICY

Bullying and harassment are not tolerated in any form. Both can be detrimental to mental and physical health and are in no way constructive or restorative.

Do not organize, participate in, or encourage the bullying and/or harassment of others. This includes:

- Verbal bullying
- Relational bullying (emotional manipulation)
- Cyberbullying
- Sexual harassment (and/or assault)
- Prejudicial bullying (i.e. usage of slurs)
- Making threats
- Continued attempts toward unwanted contact

If you witness something (either online or in-person) that might resemble bullying and/or harassment, please immediately notify **Allie Weis**, Ethics Coordinator in International Game Development (allie.weis@howest.be). Be a positive influence and a source of support – not a bystander. **Let's take care of each other.**

****HOWEST REPORTING POINT:** Within Howest & DAE, we feel strongly that – if you witness or encounter an incident of transgressive/cross-boundary behaviour – you should be able to report such an incident with clarity and ease. With the goal of lowering the threshold of asking for help, STUVO has launched a **Reporting Portal for Cross-Boundary Behaviour**.

- **How to report, and more details:**
 - Submit your report via [the following link](#).
 - Reports can be submitted anonymously, if preferable.
 - Each report is taken seriously and treated confidentially and with respect by the confidant.

- You will receive a confirmation email once your report has been submitted successfully. Your report will be received by our STUVO confidential advisor.
 - If not reported anonymously, you will be invited for an exploratory conversation in which further assistance options are presented, and a plan is made.
 - If reported anonymously, you may contact the STUVO team at your own initiative. All reports help to shape prevention policy.

3.3. POSITIVE COMMUNICATION & REINFORCEMENT

We'll keep it sweet, simple, and to the point here - our community stands for Positivity.

This means:

- Giving constructive feedback
- Reaching out to other student(s) if it seems that they are struggling
- Surrounding yourself with positive influences – “You are the sum of the five people you spend the most time with”
- Offering motivational messages and framing your communication in a positive way
- Referring others to external resources (study coaching and/or STUVO, for example) – be an ambassador of support
- Respecting personal boundaries (if you're not sure where these boundaries lie, just ask!)
- Keeping an open mind to topics of cultural sensitivity

Want to learn how to detect signals and support others? Are you looking to make a difference in your student community? Become a 'buddy' with Buddy & Mind, a project designed by STUVO to increase solidarity and emphasize peer support & well-being.

3.4. ONLINE DO'S AND DON'TS

Cyber boundaries

Let's be honest: your laptop is your best buddy. You likely have both online and offline lives, as it's inevitable to spend a significant amount of time behind your screen as a DAE student. Just as it's important to establish boundaries regarding in-person communication, it's equally important to establish these for online behaviour. While there is much overlap between the two, **we find it important to explicitly highlight our expectations for online communication.**

Discord, for example, has been a great tool for community at DAE – and it is wonderful to see the connection that online platforms are able to foster. We want everyone to have a positive experience online; in order to do so, it is important that you comply with [Discord's Community Guidelines](#). If online behaviour does not comply with these guidelines, disciplinary actions will be taken.

In addition to the Discord Community Guidelines, we would also like to introduce **DAE-specific online communication guidelines:**

Please keep the following in mind:

- *Discord is NOT an official communication platform* at DAE (official communication platforms include Microsoft Outlook, Microsoft Teams, LEHO).
- On LEHO, Outlook, and/or any other official Howest communication platform, **use an appropriate photo** of yourself (full face visible, no memes).
- **Use the name you go by in class** in the DAE Active Discord server.
- Turn your camera on if your teacher has requested it during a virtual lesson or examination (only for extenuating circumstances in which an in-person lesson and/or examination is not possible).
- Do not @ (or "ping") a teacher in a public Discord server.

- Do not private message a teacher on Discord (send your teacher an email from your Howest student email address).
- **Use professional communication** (applies to both parties; do not write a message as if you were sending a text).
- **Use common sense and maturity** when posting in an official DAE Discord server. We ask that you please refrain from posting inappropriate content (including Discord status messages, username, and server profile).
- Boundaries are extremely important in light of online communication. It can be easy for things to be misinterpreted – as tone and context can be tricky – so be sure to establish boundaries and be expressive of these.
- **Tone indicators** (i.e. /j → Joking) may be an interesting tool to use, especially if you are unsure if the tone in your online communication is clear. Tone indicators help to prevent misunderstandings and misinterpretations.

3.5. PRIVACY POLICY

Please respect others' privacy online; no one is obliged to provide identifiable information (aside from providing your real name on the DAE Active server). Ask another student politely and privately if you need identifying information (as simple as asking for a friend's phone number or address online – keep this private). If an individual puts identifiable information online, do ask consent first before using this information.

4. CROSS-BOUNDARY BEHAVIOR

The aim of this Mission Statement is not – in any way – to penalize our student community or to assert rules or regulations without student input. **We prefer guidance and support over sanctioning.** With this being said, however, it is important to understand that there are consequences

following inappropriate/cross-boundary behaviour. It is our utmost hope that every member of the DAE Community complies with our guidelines. However, if these are not complied with, further steps will be taken.

It is important to understand that each situation will be handled on a case-by-case basis, as there is not a “one size fits all” solution for inappropriate behavior.

If you feel your boundaries have not been respected, contact Allie Weis (allie.weis@howest.be), Ethics Coordinator in International Game Development. It is our responsibility to ensure the safety of our campus environment – and it is our role to ensure that DAE is a place in which every student can be themselves, comfortably.

Please also refer to the [Reporting Portal for Cross-Boundary Behaviour for Students](#). You may wish to officially report the incident, with the possibility of remaining anonymous.



Allie Weis, Ethics Coordinator in
International Game Development:
allie.weis@howest.be

5. WE BELIEVE IN STUDENT SUPPORT & GUIDANCE

As mentioned previously, we find guidance and support more restorative than sanctioning. It's crucial to feel listened to as a student at DAE. After all, this is *your* community – and you deserve access to all resources possible in order to make your time at DAE a fulfilling one.

Our Student Support Team (see graphic) remains available to support you – both psychosocially and academically – on this journey.

Mistakes happen. If you slip up and break the Community Guidelines, we are also here to support you. We're all learning, together. With the right intentions and commitment toward respect, growth is always possible.

Looking to contact a member of the Student Support Team? Find our contact information below:

COMMUNITY

- SOCIAL CONNECTION
- INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS
- ACTIVITIES & EVENTS

Farah

Isabelle

Sofie

howest
university of applied sciences

DRE
DIGITAL ARTS & ENTERTAINMENT

howest
STUVO

ETHICS COORDINATOR

- INCLUSIVITY & IDENTITY
- CROSS-BOUNDARY BEHAVIOUR

Allie

STUVO

- PSYCHOSOCIAL COUNSELING
- STUDY FINANCING
- STUDENT HOUSING

Anneleen

Aline

Marie-Laure

Simon

Serjanka

CONTACT US

STUDY TRACK COUNSELOR

Kevin

STUDY COACHING

- STUDY PLANNING
- MOTIVATIONAL SUPPORT
- SPECIAL CIRCUMSTANCES

Jeffrey

Marijn

BUDDY & MIND

- STUDENT CONNECTION
- SUPPORTIVE GATHERINGS

Katelijne

COMMUNITY TEAM

Isabelle Tassaert, Community Coordinator: isabelle.tassaert@howest.be

Sofie Ramis, Community & Creative Admin: sofie.ramis@howest.be

Farah Claessens, Community Manager: farah.claessens@howest.be

ETHICS

Allie Weis, Ethics Coordinator in International Game Development:
allie.weis@howest.be

STUVO & PEER SUPPORT

Aline Devoldere, STUVO Counselor: aline.devoldere@howest.be

Marie-Laure Paermentier, STUVO Counselor:

marie-laure.paermentier@howest.be

Anneleen Demeurisse,

STUVO Counselor: anneleen.demeurisse@howest.be

Katelijne Hanssens, Student Coach: katelijne.hanssens@howest.be

Simon Clinckemaillie,

Howest Student Activities: simon.clinckemaillie@howest.be

Serjenka Rayee, Student Housing: housing.kortrijk@howest.be

Join the [Buddy & Mind](#) Discord below!

STUDY COACHING

Marijn Verspecht, Study Coach: marijn.verspecht@howest.be

Anneleen Grootaert, Special Facilities (IGP, GD):

anneleen.grootaert@howest.be

Jeffrey Declerck, Special Facilities (All other majors): jeffrey.declerck@howest.be

Kevin Vroman, Study Track Counselor: kevin.vroman@howest.be

Katrien Verbrugge, Study Track Counselor,
Katrien.verbrugge@howest.be

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

Anne Dejager, Ombudsperson: anne.dejager@howest.be (The primary duties of an ombudsperson are (1) to work with individuals and groups in an organization to explore and assist them in determining options to help resolve conflicts, problematic issues or concerns, and (2) to bring systemic concerns to the attention of the organization for resolution.)

- Contact Tim if you need to investigate a complaint, but first contact a member of our Community team. We will see what is possible and will refer you, if needed.

6. EMERGENCY NUMBERS & SERVICES

- **Police:** 101
- **Urgent medical assistance:** 112
- **General Practitioner on duty:** 1733
- **Poison Centre:** 070245245
- **Psychiatric emergency intervention unit (Kortrijk)**
- **Suicide hotline:** 1813
- **Violence & abuse hotline:** 1712
- **Sexual Assault Centres (SAC)**
- **Tele-Onthaal** (24/7 conversational hotline): 106
 - Topics include: relationship problems, loneliness, mental health, abuse
- **Kortrijk point of contact for reporting discrimination/hate crime:** Ferdinand Depypere (PZ Vlas); Call 1701 or email Ferdinand.depypere@police.belgium.edu

- **City of Kortrijk 'Over Your Boundaries' Info site (including reporting point)**
- **UNIA Reporting Point** (or call the free number 0800 12 800) (Flanders, Brussels, & Wallonia)
- **Moodspace:**
 - MoodSpace is a place for students, which is packed with reliable information, tips and self-help tools to tackle emotional problems or to help you study confidently. It offers room for student stories and pep talks, and helps you find the help you need.
- **Centrum Geestelijke Gezondheidszorg (Center for Mental Health)**

7. ENDNOTE

A very special thanks to those who helped in writing this Mission Statement. This document – which we envision as a living and breathing guideline – was largely created by the DAE Student Ethics Working Group. Sincerest gratitude is owed to the students who took time to contribute to the well-being, safety, and security of the DAE Community. It's your home away from home.

This Mission Statement will grow over time – as we all do. If you have feedback and suggestions – or would like to get involved with ethics at DAE – please send them to **Allie Weis** (allie.weis@howest.be).

8. ADDITIONAL RESOURCES: LEARN MORE!

- [City of Kortrijk Inclusion & Diversity](#)
- [Avansa](#) (Socio-cultural organization organizing trainings and workshops on various societally-relevant topics)
- [Cavaria](#) (Flemish advocate for LGBTQI+ and umbrella organization of LGBTQI+ organizations)
- [UNIA: What is discrimination?](#) (Based on: Age, birth, civil status, disability, fortune, origin or social condition, physical characteristics, political conviction, protected gender criterion, racial characteristics, religious or philosophical convictions, sexual orientation, state of health, or trade union conviction)
- [Ethical Games Initiative](#)