

**EXECUTIVE SUMMARY FOR EDUCATIONAL POLICYMAKERS,  
PROGRAM DIRECTORS, AND TEACHING STAFF**

# **WORK ENVIRONMENT DYNAMICS AND SOFT SKILLS IN ANIMATION, GAMES, AND VFX INDUSTRIES**

PANEURAMA Report 2024



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## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY - TAILORED FOR EDUCATIONAL POLICYMAKERS, PROGRAM DIRECTORS, AND TEACHING STAFF

### Transforming Education for the Future: Balancing Industry Demands and Educational Mandates in European Games, Animation, and VFX

This executive summary, tailored for educational policymakers, program directors, and teaching staff, distills key findings from the comprehensive [2024 PANEURAMA Project Report](#) examining the complex dynamics between the games, animation, and VFX industries, educational institutions, and students. While the full report provides detailed analysis supported by extensive participant interviews, this summary focuses on crucial insights and strategic implications for educational policy and practice.

### Current Industry Trends and Educational Implications

The games, animation, and VFX industries are experiencing a significant cultural shift, moving away from the 'rockstar' employee archetype toward valuing humble, adaptable team players. This transformation reflects growing industry-wide efforts to create more sustainable and inclusive workplaces. Educational institutions are now challenged to produce graduates who embody these values while still remaining competitive in an oversaturated job market.

#### Key Industry Expectations for "Ideal Employees":

- Strong collaborative skills and cultural competence
- Flexible and proactive problem-solving abilities
- Commitment to continuous skill development
- Effective communication across disciplines
- Client-focused mindset
- Receptiveness to feedback
- Healthy work-life balance
- Creative inspiration from outside work
- Mobility and English language proficiency

These expectations create a complex mandate for educational institutions that must balance developing these qualities while also preparing graduates to stand out as the "ideal applicant" in a competitive market that paradoxically demands exceptional individual portfolios and aggressive self-promotion.

### The Educational Challenge: Ethical Dilemmas and Pedagogical Approaches

Educational institutions face several significant challenges in responding to these industry shifts:

#### Educational Market Saturation

- Proliferation of games, animation, and VFX programs with varying quality levels
- Competitive pressure to "produce" showcase-worthy graduates and projects
- Concerns over transparency in educational offerings and employment outcomes
- Diminishing pre-selection role of educational institutions in oversaturated market

#### Contradictory Industry and Market Demands

- Industry values humility, collaboration, and sustainable work practices
- Job market rewards exceptional portfolios, self-promotion, and networking
- Some industry segments demand "rockstar" qualities despite stated preferences
- Graduates must embody both "ideal employee" and "ideal applicant" personas

#### Educational Approaches in Transition

- Shift from traditional, modular instruction to project-based, collaborative learning
- Transition from lecturer-as-expert to educational staff as mentors and coaches
- Growing emphasis on self-directed learning requiring new competencies
- Challenges in supporting students from diverse backgrounds and skill levels

These challenges create ethical dilemmas for educational institutions, particularly regarding how to prepare students for market realities without perpetuating unsustainable work practices or producing "cannon fodder" for exploitative industry segments.

## Current Educational Responses and Innovation

Educational institutions are actively experimenting with innovative approaches to address these challenges:

### Curriculum Evolution

- Integration of collaborative, project-based learning with real-world applications
- Balance between group work and individual portfolio development time
- Enhanced focus on self-directed learning and lifelong learning mindsets

### Industry Collaboration

- Regular industry engagement through guest lectures and master classes
- Portfolio review sessions with industry professionals
- Facilitated networking opportunities and recruitment events
- Industry-informed assessment criteria and project briefs

### Support for Student Development

- Personalized career guidance and portfolio development
- Coaching on effective networking and self-promotion
- Critical self-assessment and realistic career planning
- Support for mental health and work-life balance

Research indicates these approaches are yielding positive results but require continued refinement to effectively address the complex demands placed on graduates.

## Key Challenges for Educational Staff

The evolving educational landscape presents significant challenges for teaching staff:

### Role Transformation

- Transitioning from subject-matter experts to learning coaches
- Balancing technical instruction with soft skills development
- Supporting diverse student learning needs and career aspirations
- Maintaining current industry knowledge while fulfilling expanded responsibilities

## Generational Tensions

- Differing perspectives between staff with traditional industry experience and newer approaches
- Varying comfort with evolving teaching methodologies
- Challenges in creating a unified educational voice
- Balancing teaching traditional techniques with emerging technologies

## Resource and Time Constraints

- Limited time for staff's continuous professional development
- Challenges in addressing individual student needs at scale
- Balancing workload expectations for students and staff

These challenges are compounded by the rapid pace of industry change, requiring constant curriculum updates and pedagogical innovation.

## Recommendations for Educational Institutions

Based on industry and student feedback, several key recommendations emerge for educational institutions:

### Strategic Program Development

- Maintain transparency about program outcomes and employment prospects
- Balance industry-led approaches with educational mandates for critical thinking and innovation
- Develop tailored pathways for diverse student goals and capabilities

### Pedagogical Innovation

- Design curricula that explicitly balance collaborative and individual work
- Create safe environments for experimentation and #FailingForward
- Incorporate leadership development within creative contexts
- Provide structured guidance for self-directed learning

### Industry Alignment

- Facilitate ongoing dialogue between education, industry, and students
- Critically evaluate industry demands rather than blindly implementing them
- Advocate for sustainable work practices and inclusive environments

### Student Support

- Provide realistic guidance on career pathways and job market realities
- Offer tailored advice on work-life balance based on individual capabilities
- Create structured opportunities for networking and portfolio development
- Address the needs of diverse student populations, including neurodivergent students

### Faculty Development

- Support staff transition to coaching and mentoring roles
- Facilitate continuous professional development in industry practices
- Create dialogue between staff with different perspectives and experiences
- Address workload and wellbeing concerns for educational staff

Implementing these recommendations requires ongoing assessment, adaptation, and

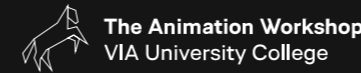
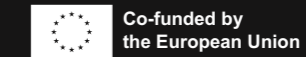
### Towards a Balanced Educational Vision

The PANEURAMA report reveals a sector in transition, with educational institutions playing a crucial role in shaping the future workforce of the games, animation, and VFX industries. While substantial progress has been made in aligning education with industry needs, significant challenges remain in balancing market demands with educational values and student wellbeing.

By embracing these principles while remaining adaptable to evolving industry demands, educational institutions can fulfill their mandate to prepare graduates who are not only employable but who will also contribute to the positive transformation of the games, animation, and VFX industries.

The complete report provides extensive voices from industry professionals, educators and students through direct quotes, illuminating case studies, and in-depth experiences that offer rich perspectives on these complex challenges. These authentic insights provide valuable context and nuance that can guide educational institutions in developing effective responses to the evolving landscape of games, animation, and VFX education.

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**PANEURAMA Report:**  
**WORK ENVIRONMENT DYNAMICS AND SOFT SKILLS IN  
ANIMATION, GAMES, AND VFX INDUSTRIES**

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The PANEURAMA Project research results in three reports that assess the current landscape, challenges, and achievements in the following areas:

*Work Environment Dynamics and Soft Skills in the Animation, Games, and VFX Industries (2024)*

*Innovation and Entrepreneurship in the Animation, Games, and VFX Industries (2025)*

*New Technologies in the Animation, Games, and VFX Industries (2026)*

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