Masters in video gaming at NTU

BY DARYL LIM

NANYANG Technological University (NTU) and Hong Kong-based game company TQ Global have teamed up to offer a Master of Engineering degree with a special focus on game development.

Already, the pioneer batch of six students are working on a game for the Xbox 360 and PlayStation 3 consoles. The game is expected to be released next year.

The two-year course started in August last year.

It offers a unique opportunity for the students to work directly with TQ and its partner studio in the United States on actual commercial projects as part of the course.

The students—whose tuition fees are sponsored by TQ—will serve a two-year bond with the company in Singapore after they graduate.

The collaboration will see five batches of students go through the course over the next six years. After the first batch, NTU expects to take in at least 10 students per year.

"Through this collaboration, NTU students will be exposed to real commercial game products for a complete game development and production experience," said Associate Professor Seah Hock Soon, chairman of NTU’s School of Computer Engineering.

"With this programme, we hope to produce outstanding future game developers for Singapore and beyond," he said.

TQ Global, with the support of the Media Development Authority, will be investing $3 million over the next six years. The money will go towards students’ course fees, monthly stipends of $2,000 for each student, and other resources such as console development kits and software.

Mr. David Nguyen, 25, was already a computer engineering student at NTU when he heard about the course and decided to sign up.

He is now developing the terrain for the game, trying to make it look more realistic by simulating the rain and water flow erodes mountains.

"I’m an avid gamer. But in Vietnam, where I come from, there aren’t many chances for me to pursue my passion for gaming. This course gives me an opportunity to learn directly from experienced game developers.

"And I’m excited about being able to see my name on the game’s credits roll," he said.

Mr. Nguyen has already decided to make game development his career.

"I’ll probably stay in Singapore after the bond period to develop more games," he said.