

Equity Best Practice Guidance for Video Game Companies Engaging Performers

The information and advice contained within these guidelines is based on lived experience of Equity members and has received input from other types of workers involved in the production of video games. This guide was created to support those who work with video games performers to establish proportionate fee structures and ethical terms and conditions.

We encourage video games companies engaging performers to contact Equity to gain access to the appropriate contracts. If you have any questions, or would like to discuss contracts or any elements outlined in these guidelines, please contact our videogames representatives by email: games@equity.org.uk

Non-Disclosure Agreements (NDAs)

- NDAs must be straightforward, clear and concise
 - NDAs must not contain fees, usage and contractual terms and conditions
 - NDAs must not contain any additional, unusual clauses such as the assignment of rights, exclusivity, or gagging clauses
 - NDAs must not stop actors from talking to their agents about the role
 - NDAs must not require actors to inform clients if they notice someone else breaking their NDA, even if they didn't get the role
 - Please read our NDA guidance for more information.
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Transparency of Commercial Terms

- Producers and engagers should provide performers with a full and forthright description of the role at the time of booking. All performers should receive the following information:
 - Code name of the project
 - Overall production budget
 - Length of Performer's role
 - Description of genre (as one or more of): a) fighting/shooter; b) role playing game; c) simulation/racing/sports; or d) puzzle/casual/kids & family/strategy
 - Whether the project is based upon a previously published intellectual property, including any film, television program, novel, play, videogame, or other work
 - Whether the performer is being asked to reprise a role from a prior game
 - Whether the performer will be credited
 - Whether a risk assessment has been carried out.
 - If the performance data will be scanned and used for other projects, or for machine learning (AI).
 - Confirmation of valid performance insurance to cover the safety of actors on set
 - Short summary of overall game storyline
 - Short description of the role and how it fits into the context of the game
 - Context/explanations of additional scripts for patches and expansions of storylines (where possible)

- Voiceover (only) should receive the following information:
 - Script
 - Script should be sent to performer 2-3 days before the recording, but no later than 24 hours in advance of the first record.
 - Use of unusual terminology
 - Whether use of profanity, content of a sexual or violent nature, or racial slurs are required;
 - Whether yelling, screaming, accents, singing and or creature noise will be required
 - Whether memorisation is required;
 - Whether use of a specific accent, dialect, or additional language will be required
 - Performance Capture (only) should receive the following information:
 - Call sheet with a schedule of scenes to be recorded during that session
 - Whether cue cards or other prompting devices will be used.
 - Whether stunts will be required;
 - Whether specialist performance skills, fighting or demanding physical action will be required;
 - Confirmation of a fully private dedicated changing room/area with a lockable door.
 - Whether use of props, stilts or arm extenders will be required.
 - Confirmation of valid performance insurance to cover the safety of actors on set
 - Whether use of profanity, content of a sexual or violent nature, or racial slurs are required
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Recommended Rates

- Please see Equity's Video Games Recommended Rate Card, which we have published in the absence of collectively bargained agreements. The rates are minimum fees and are upwardly negotiable between a performer (or their agent) and the engager. We encourage AAA, indie and low budget productions to contact Equity to discuss these rates and other contractual arrangements.
 - Equity does not endorse the practice of universal buyouts of original material. We acknowledge that this is the established model in the videogames industry. However, this practice does not align with the work of performers in other industries nor does it respect the long-term contribution of performers. Going forward, we would like to work constructively with the industry to establish a framework for where performers benefit financially in the success of a game/franchise.
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Contracts

- A performer should always be provided with a contract before the engagement takes place. Please contact Equity to gain access to a template contract via games@equity.org.uk
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Payment Terms

- Milestones/deadlines that trigger payment should be clearly set out in the performers' contract.
- Fees should either be paid upfront or in increments throughout the contractual period.
- Payment should not be based on the completion of the game.
- Fees should be paid within 28 days (20 working days) of submission of the performers' invoice.
- Details outlining how fees will be processed, including invoice requirements (e.g. purchase order number, project code, point of contact etc) should be agreed in advance.

Pencils

- Projected recording sessions can be outlined in availability checks, offers and/or contracts.
 - Production should endeavour to confirm or release any pencilled dates 7 days prior to the booking. Cancellation can be assumed if confirmation has not been received within 24 hours prior to the pencilled recording date.
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Working Hours

Equity recommends the following working hours for engaging voiceover and performance capture.

- Voiceover:
 - Normal working hours: 0900-1800
 - Half day: 4 hours
 - Full day: 8 hours (including 1-hour lunch)
 - Overtime: Pro-rata every 30 minutes
 - Breaks: 5 minutes per working hour.
 - Vocally Stressful Sessions: best practice would be max 2 hours per session. Sessions should be scheduled at the end of the working day, preferably end of the week.
 - MoCap/P-Cap:
 - Normal working hours: 0900-1800 (with a 1-hour break)
 - Call time: Cast usually called at 0700-0800 for suiting-up.
 - Overtime: pro-rata every 30 minutes past normal wrap time
 - Breaks: 5 minutes per working hour.
 - Working hours outside normal working hours are at the discretion of the Performer and additional payment can be negotiated.
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Risk Assessments (Mo-Cap/Performance Capture)

- Shoot specific risk assessments should be carried out for each shooting block. The creating and checking of the document should be the responsibility of either the studio or stunt coordinator (where applicable).
 - A competent stunt coordinator should be on set to oversee any strenuous physical actions and will advise on safety and decide whether the performer is competent to perform physically demanding action.
 - Anything deemed a stunt should be re-scheduled to be performed by a capable and skilled performer.
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Vocal safety

- Directors, vocal coaches, on-set producers and actors must work together to ensure that the work undertaken is safe at any given time and that anything deemed vocally strenuous is approached with appropriate guidance.
 - Specific expectations about the amount of time or number of lines that require vocal combat or extremes should be specified as part of the audition process.
 - Vocally stressful game recording sessions should be limited to 2 hours.
 - Sessions should be scheduled at the end of the day to minimise disruptions to other work, and end-of-week sessions to allow performers to recover fully over the weekend.
 - Please visit our sister union ACTRA Toronto for more information about best practices.
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Welfare

- All call sheets should specify breaks throughout the shooting schedule and any access needs or requirements should be flagged as early as possible to the producer or production team.
 - The studio is responsible for ensuring that there are clean, accessible, fully private and lockable changing facilities for performers.
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Explicit Content / Intimate Scenes

- A full summary and outline of the story, scene breakdown and scripts (where possible) should be distributed to all cast members ahead of shooting or recording.
 - Any explicit scenes with explicit language or content should be flagged up to a performer before recording
 - A safe line of communication should be in place between talent and production should the performer have any concerns or questions about content.
 - Any and all sensitive content should be flagged as early in the process as possible by producers to cast members and their representatives.
 - When recording any scenes of an explicit nature or intimate scenes, performers should be able to request a closed set.
 - A competent intimacy coordinator should be engaged to oversee any scenes of an intimate nature.
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Artificial Intelligence & Integration

- A developer, studio or publisher should confirm with the performer that the data recorded within the stipulated performance sessions will be used for the stated project only and not re-used in future titles.
 - A pre-purchase / integration fee should be paid when a developer, studio or publisher wishes to hold performance data in their 'library' for potential re-use on future projects. Please see Equity's Video Games Recommended Rate Card for more information.
 - If an integration fee is not paid upfront at the point of contracting, then the performance should only be used within the project(s) specified in the contract.
 - Please read Equity's AI Vision Statement for more information about the ethical use of AI.
 - Any use of A.I. should be pre-agreed with the performer and informed consent given.
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Credits

- Performers should be properly and individually credited for their contribution to the game.
 - If a producer does not wish to credit a principal performer, this should be clearly specified at the point of offer.
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Promotion

- Please use the Equity Videogames Recommended Rate Card to negotiate an appropriate fee if you require a performer for the following services: making publicity stills, promos, or trailers; attending conventions, fan meetings, autograph sessions, etc., or make live appearances to promote a game; blogs, tweet, etc.
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Equality and Diversity

- The casting, audition and recording process should be fair, safe and inclusive. Please read our [advice and guidance](#) for more information.
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Dignity at Work

- Behaviour that constitutes bullying, harassment, or any other form of disrespectful conduct should not be tolerated. This includes, but is not limited to, verbal, written, electronic, or physical actions that create an offensive, hostile, or intimidating atmosphere. A respectful and inclusive environment fosters creativity, collaboration, and excellence in our industry.
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Mental Health

Producers and engagers should address the harmful impacts of precarious work by committing to improving pay and work-life balance. This is central for enabling good mental health and maintaining healthy, safe workplaces. Working with Equity on collective terms and conditions is an excellent indicator of a commitment to ensuring best practice and welfare standards for those you engage.

- Producers and engagers should adopt relevant safeguards in the workplace, such as mental health risk assessments, safe space policies and consultation on organisational change. Equal attention should be paid to the mental health needs of all performers and creative workers.
- Producers and engagers must not exclude historically marginalised groups, such as ethnically diverse and LGBTQIA communities, from policies and practices designed for promoting safe, inclusive workplaces. These workers face multiplier effects of low pay, precarious work and discrimination upon their mental health and their welfare and rights should be championed.
- Please read Equity's [Mental Health Charter](#) for more information.