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Electronic Arts brings the game to LSU main campus

(Source: [The Advocate](#))

Imagine yourself absorbed in your favorite entertainment activity, like taking photos of food or flying paper planes. Now imagine getting paid to do that every day. That's what 350 video game testers are doing in the Louisiana Digital Media Center on LSU's main campus in Baton Rouge. Previously housed on LSU South Campus, the facility had reached maximum capacity, which prompted the move.

The new centre is located behind Parker Coliseum, and it's the brand new headquarters for Electronic Arts' North American Testing Centre (EA NATC). The state-of-the-art facility is the latest materialization in the relationship that has developed between EA, LSU and Baton Rouge since 2008.

EA came to Louisiana to take advantage of tax credits the state offers for digital media production, which includes film, music and video games. This EA location is the only testing centre in North America, and having access to a massive university student population and young adults in a town like Baton Rouge is a big plus for all parties involved.

"This is a unique partnership," Patrick Lamont, the lead recruiter at NATC, explained. "The EA brand is right here on campus, lending credibility to [LSU's] Digital Media program. EA has a direct pipeline of talent to work on our games. The benefit for students is getting their foot in door."

EA came to LSU with sports in mind – it brought titles like "NCAA Football," "NBA," "Madden" and "Tiger Woods." Since then, its operations have grown across multiple labels and platforms.

"We started with lots of sports games," said Drake Kutz, the recruiting specialist at NATC. "As this place has blown up, we get Sims, Facebook and mobile [games]. Anything that EA makes in North America will come through here."

By the end of this year, EA estimates to have 500 testers working in the new center. Each tester has his or her own personal workstation in which to find bugs. There's also a fully equipped break room where testers can relax with a Starbucks coffee machine, arcade games and even a small hockey goal.

Once the building is complete, the first two floors will be dedicated to LSU's emerging Digital Media degree programs, including game design and animation.

Lamont noted that quality assurance is a very in-depth part of EA's development and design process when asked about video game design opportunities in the new centre.

"What you see here is advanced levels of quality assurance," he said, "like QA engineering and QA automation. It's going to be interesting to see how it evolves. We didn't expect this place to get so big so fast."

In addition to school and work, EA and video games are about having fun, and so is LSU. Every football season, large tents and fancy displays can be found at tailgates on LSU Parade Grounds – from ESPN's College Gameday to a showing of Batmobiles from the Batman films. With EA now located on campus, visitors can expect to see EA tents at sporting events ready to entertain.

"We plan on getting out to Free Speech Alley and setting up TVs and consoles, letting everyone know we're on LSU's main campus now," Kutz said. "When people walk by and see our EA logo and big TVs, they want to get in on the Madden, free games and raffles. The response we have at these events is extremely positive."

EA's NATC is located on East Parker Boulevard. The building is currently open only to testers and EA employees. The remainder of the facility is projected to be completed this summer, bringing classrooms, eateries, jobs and entertainment to the south end of LSU campus.

If you are a passionate video gamer, you can be a quality assurance tester at EA. To apply, simply attend a recruiting event or visit jobs.ea.com.

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