

GURPS: Shadowrun

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Introduction

This Document describes a set of house rules for playing Shadowrun with GURPS rules. This is no full worldbook, neither is it a full rulebook. If you want more background information about Shadowrun, please stick to the worldbooks of Fasa/FanPro. Most important information can be found in Shadowrun, 3rd Edition, referenced as “SR3” from now on.

Abbreviations:

GURPS Page References – The abbreviations mentioned in GURPS Compendium I are used here where appropriate.

SR3 – Fasa’s Shadowrun 3rd Edition, (Page References are for US Version)

Cyber- and Bioware

GURPS: Shadowrun takes over the basic Shadowrun rules about cyberware and their effect on mind and body. Here is a quick overview:

Essence

The Essence of a character measures his life force. It represents the body’s cohesiveness and holistic strength. Replacing parts of the body with unnatural things like cyberware reduces the Essence. Essence lost will never regenerate, not even if the implanted cyberware is removed. You can reuse the “free space” though and implant new cyberware for the lost essence. Every character starts with an Essence of 6.

Essence must never drop below 0. If it does, you will get problems with cybermantics, as described in the Shadowrun sourcebook “Men and Machine”.

Bio-Index

Since Bioware is less intrusive to a human body, so it can sustain more of it. Exceeding the limit is also less dangerous (see “Men and Machine here too). Each bioware has a so called “Bio-Index” cost associated with it. As with the cyberwares Essence cost it resembles the amount of intrusion to a human body. Add 3 to the remaining Essence. This is the maximum amount of Bioware your body can take without trouble.

Lost Essence, Bioware and Magic

Lost essence greatly hinders the flow of magical energies. This has several implications for magic-users. First and most important. Any mage who has lost essence causes the following effects::

Add the amount of lost Essence and implanted Bioware together. For every 0,5 points, permanently reduce all magic-related skills and attributes by one (round up, even 0,01 lost essence counts here). The same rules apply if any mage tries to use any closely body-related spells (like Healing) on any person with lost essence, impose the same penalty on the skillroll of the mage based on the Essence loss of the target.

Combat

Some changes are made to the GURPS combat system to make its feel more Shadowrun-like.

Reaction Speed, Combat Turn Sequence, Combat Initiative

We define the reaction speed of a given character as the average of IQ and DX, rounded down. This value resembles a characters ability to quickly react to sudden changes in the environment. Combat Reflexes gives a +1 to this attribute.

Derived from this is the combat sequence. At the start of each combat turn, each character rolls 1D6 and adds this to his reaction speed giving him his Combat Initiative. At the start of a combat turn, the GM counts this initiative upwards, asking each player what he likes to do this round. This gives faster players a chance to react to the planned actions of slower people. The actions are then resolved in reverse order.

Natural Recoil Compensation

Characters with high strength or with high body mass can get a natural recoil compensation when firing weapons. This bonus is cumulative with a recoil compensator mounted on a weapon and might reduce a weapons effective recoil to zero.

For each full five points a character is over the Min ST requirement of a weapon he gains a +1 modifier to his recoil number. Alternatively, for each full 100 lbs a character weights over 150 lbs, he will also get a +1 modifier to the recoil of weapons. Only the higher of these two values take effect, they are not cumulative. The bonus aquired is limited to a +1 for automatic weapons and a +2 for semi-automatic weapons.

Vehicles and Riggers

GURPS: Shadowrun basically uses GURPS: Vehicles for Vehicle Construction and Vehicle Actions. Additions include Rigger Rules and Smartlink Rules

Vehicle Control Rigs

Anybody with a Vehicle Control Rig Implant gains a +2 Bonus per level of the VCR Implant to any Vehicle operation including sensor enhanced weapon fire, sensor operation and any other electronic device operation. Riggers can control as many weapons simultaneously as they like, with a -2 per weapon or weapon group used. Weapons can be grouped together (e.g. firing the two LMG mounts at the same target simultaneously) with no penalty.

Sensor enhanced Weapon Fire

If you are using a sensor array to target your weapons, you can ignore all penalties for darkness, bad vision or invisibility. Additionally, a radar, ladar, imaging radar or AESA will give an additional +2 bonus to hit. (See V171 and V177 for further modifiers.)

Manual Weapon Fire

The drawback of sensor-based vehicular weapon fire is, that they require more time to be used. A sensor lock-on requires at least one second of time and can be difficult to achieve on small or well equipped (read “stealthed”) targets. Under that circumstances, manual weapon fire may be more efficient. This is resolved like any standard GURPS Attack using the modifiers in the sidebar of V177.

To take full advantage of this, vehicle-mounted weapons can be equipped with Smartlink systems. Adding a Smartlink Adapter Set, this can be linked to the vehicle’s rigger controls. In that case you will receive the to hit bonuses of the Smartlink system for your to-hit roll up to a maximum of the VCR bonus (the +2/level). Smartlink and sensor enhanced gunnery are not cumulative. Use either one or the other. Magic

Magic is the point where the majority of the changes occurred. First of all: Most of the SR3 magic rules are replaced by the standard GURPS magic system. Some changes are made to the GURPS system to reflect Shadowrun’s magic style, this is especially true for Nature Spirits and the Astral Plane.

Basic Changes

No ritual is required for spellcasting. For most spells a line-of-sight is sufficient to cast them, some special spells require the caster to touch the target, like usual. Missile spells can be enlarged by Magery/2 (round down) levels per second. Range modifiers for normal spells are also different: Instead of the -1/m are replaced by the regular ranged combat modifiers for range/speed, size and visibility modifiers.

Learning spells requires a teacher or a spell formula and time. The time is governed by the energy cost of the largest listed item for that spell. Divide the energy cost by 100. This is the basic time in days required to learn the spell. Roll IQ+Magery. Divide the success margin by three (round down). Divide the basic time by this final result to get the effective time required.

Spell-Casting Fatigue

Each character can naturally buy $ST \times 2/3$ levels of extra spell-casting Fatigue (this is a 33% limitation). For each level of magery the character can buy five additional levels of spell-casting fatigue.

New Spells: School of Combat Spells

This is a conversion of Shadowrun’s Combat Spells.

Skillsofts and Skillchips

As described in SR3 295, there are four categories of Skillsofts: *Activesofts*, *Knowsofts*, *Linguasofts* and *Datasofts*. We keep this distinction for GURPS: Shadowrun.

Knowsofts, Linguasofts and Datasofts

Knowsofts replicate skills, where no manual dexterity is required, basically this are the mental skills from GURPS, but the GM should keep an eye on exceptions. Also the GM has the final word about the availability of people skills like Fast-Talk, Carousing and similar things. A special variant, the linguasofts, replicate only languages and therefore require less space than regular knowsofts. Datasofts stay as they are: Pure information.

These knowsofts can be accessed either with a chipjack or with a knowsoft link (either piped through a datajack or stored in headware memory). Datasofts can be accessed through a datajack, but most information requires a display or image link to take the full advantage of them.

Activesofts

Activesofts are an entirely different matter. They duplicate skills that require active usage of your body, like combat, physical, technical or vehicle skills. A full skillwire system (see “Bodyware”) is required to make use of such software, the softs can be accessed through datajacks, chipjacks and from headware memory.

Skillsoft Costs

Every skillsoft has a rating. This resembles the character-point equivalent of a skill in use. The expert systems of regular skillsofts use an attribute level of 12 as basis for skill levels. Use the standard GURPS rules for calculating the effective skill level. Skillsofts can be specialized according to standard GURPS rules with one exception: Skillsofts using optional specialization do not get the +5 bonus for their specialization and they only work for the specified specialization.

Calculate the program size in Megapulses for skillsofts according to this formula:

$$\text{Size in Mp} = 3 \times (\text{CP equivalent})^2$$

Specialized skillsofts and linguasofts use this:

$$\text{Size in Mp} = 2 \times (\text{CP equivalent})^2$$

Limitations

Though Skillsofts can give a character incredible flexibility (think of Matrix “Can you fly this thing?” – “Not yet”), they have a couple of drawbacks: First of all, an active skillsoft must fully override a character’s reflexes, abilities and memories. This means, that even if the character has a certain skill at a lower level than the skillsoft, it will give him no advantage. Either the skillsoft is active and you use its skill level or not. Also, the Karma Pool is not available for any Skillsoft action.

Also, the actions of Activesofts are foreseeable. Any character with real knowledge of a specific skill you can roll a contest skills between the skillsoft and the character’s skill level. If successful, use the margin of success in advantage for the character without skillsoft. This is

especially interesting if anybody is in close combat with a skillsoft-using character. In this case, roll every combat turn.

Miscellaneous Rules

Holdout vs. Concealment

Holdout and Concealment are roughly interchangeable:

$$\text{Holdout} = \text{Concealability} - 6$$

Availability

GURPS itself does not provide an availability mechanism. The dice roll is done using the Contact's Skill level. To get a GURPS Skill Modifier use this rule:

$$\text{GURPS Modifier} = (\text{SR Target Number} - 4) \times (-1)$$

Some Items have their Availability depending on their rating. In those cases the GURPS: Shadowrun equipment list uses R as a variable in the Rating definition. If it is used as a Availability Target number, negate the value: Rating 6 giving a -6 modifier, if R-2 is specified, do the negation *before* applying the -2 modifier to the rating. If it is used as a time range instead, do not negate it.

The MegaPulse

Now, how big is this mystic Shadowrun Megapulse? I came to the conclusion, that it should be oriented somewhere around 10 to 20 MegaBytes. To get a clearer idea, here are some samples from SR3: 1 Mp can contain 60 hires photographs, 60 seconds of average resolution video, 300 seconds of hi-fidelity audio recoding,

New or Changed Advantages

Combat Reflexes (15 Points)

Combat Reflexes also give a +1 Bonus on any Reaction Value of the Character.

Vehicle Empathy (10 Points)

Vehicle Empathy gives you a +2 modifier for any vehicle control roll if you are in direct physical control with the vehicle. It is compatible with Vehicle Control Rigs and works fine as long as you are not in remote control mode.

New Bioware

Sense Booster

Augments the Senses of the user. It is available in Ratings from one to four and gives the user the Advantage of Alertness at that level. Be aware, that high levels of augmentation might induce sensory overload in situation where the senses are bombarded. Roll vs. Will in that case.

New Equipment

Gyrostabilized Weapon Harness

This is basically the Gyromount described in UT2 62. It reduces Min ST by 3, which is often sufficient for a ST based Recoil Reduction and provides a +2 to hit bonus usable only to negate the user's own movement penalties. Changes include: The effective Recoil of a weapon is halved, keep the fraction of the single volleys but round the running recoil total down. The gyroslave mode described in UT2 is only usable in conjunction with a Smartlink system. Under that circumstances apply a further -2 modifier to the weapons Snapshot number. The weapon system takes over the aiming process, you just look at the point you wish to aim at and the Weapon Harness aligns the weapon to it. To use this, a Smartlink induction field is available at the harness itself so that the weapon can move freely. Alternatively, the link can be established through a datajack, effectively freeing both hands of the user.

It takes five minutes to strap on and prepare the Harness, 3 seconds to "quick-release" out of it and 6 seconds to attach or detach a weapon.