

THE VALUE OF CREATIVE GRADUATES

Research Report 2024

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Institutions Association

UKADIA

Distinction and Diversity
in Higher Education

GuildHE

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Foreword

This country has a world-leading creative industry. It also has world leading creative education institutions. Across our art and design universities, film schools and performing arts institutes our students can articulate and evidence their creative skills very effectively. They recognise and value their journeys as creative practitioners: they thrive in the demanding intellectual and technical settings that characterise the great creative institutions dotted throughout the country.

It is clear from the hosts of extraordinary alumni that grace the global scene, our students also develop skills and attributes which make them employable in many industries, and which contribute to their development as global citizens with high levels of social responsibility and economic impact.

However, our very subject is under pressure from the systematic devaluing of creative education. The pipeline of talent is being squeezed. Secondary schools are abandoning creative and cultural subjects, school art rooms and workshops are closing, fewer art and designer teachers are being trained and employed, and arts courses are unfairly criticised as 'low-value learning'.

To help us fully understand and contest this challenging environment we need a clear evidence base, robust longitudinal data, and compelling narratives drawn from both the arts sector and from industries further afield, to help realign the perception of the value of creative graduates.

This report attempts just that. As one of several strategic workstreams, UKADIA – working closely with GuildHE – commissioned this report, enlisting a group of subject specialists under the direction of Lisa Mann Executive Director of Innovation at Arts University Bournemouth to address the pressing question: how can we properly and fairly evaluate – and value – our creative graduates?

It offers a timely, thoughtful and well-researched account of the signature pedagogies at the heart of our subject, and identifies the many transferable skills developed during a creative degree. The recommendations aim to redress and realign the perception of the value of creative education in this country. We have the potential to bring about real change as we position our courses, art schools and creative higher education providers at the heart of a diverse, creative nation, capable of changing lives and nurturing inspirational, employable graduates, who can promote economic growth, social benefit and global impact. Our aim now is to translate these recommendations into actions.

Prof Paul Gough
Chair UKADIA and Vice-Chancellor at Arts University Bournemouth

Members of the Steering Group

- **Lisa Mann (Chair)**, Executive Director of Innovation at Arts University Bournemouth
- **Baptiste Bourgougnon**, Director of Undergraduate Courses and International Development at The London Contemporary Dance School
- **Professor Stephen Felmingham**, Pro Vice-Chancellor (Academic) & Professor of Artistic Research at Arts University Plymouth
- **Dana Gamble**, Policy Manager (Places and Knowledge Exchange) at GuildHE
- **Javneet Ghuman**, Associate Director, Policy and Advocacy at University of the Arts London
- **Rob Ingram**, Senior Head of the Academy of Continuing Education at Falmouth University
- **Professor Sean McNamara**, Principal and CEO at the Liverpool Institute for Performing Arts
- **Chris Slesser**, Development and Partnerships Manager at Creative UK
- **Dr Kate Wicklow**, Policy Director at GuildHE

*GuildHE is an officially recognised representative body for UK Higher Education, championing distinction and diversity in the sector. Our 60+ members include universities, university colleges, further education colleges and specialist institutions and include some major providers in professional subject areas including art, design and media, music and the performing arts. We also host the United Kingdom Arts and Design Institutions Association (ukadia) which is made up of leading creative specialist institutions. **Overall we represent 37% of all design, and creative and performing arts students in the UK.***



Executive Summary

This country has a world-leading creative industry. In 2022, government estimated that it provided over 2.4 million jobs and generated £126bn in gross value added (GVA) to the economy. Between 2010 and 2019 it grew more than one and a half times faster than the wider economy and in 2019 contributed more to GVA than the aerospace, automotive, life sciences and oil and gas sectors combined. It also exports £46bn of goods and services annually, representing 14% of all UK services exports.

As traditional industries such as manufacturing, print and reproduction, and publishing have seen a widespread decline, emerging industries such as the digital sector have soared, and creative jobs have overtaken finance as an important area of employment in London with 1 in 5 jobs being in the creative occupations. Politicians across the house have made commitments to prioritise the creative sector in order to deliver future growth. With a new government we look to the Labour Party's Sector Deal to support the future of this work. It crucially includes creative education as an important component of a successful economy. However, whilst there is a commitment to support and nurture creative talent, there needs to be a more joined up approach within government departments as well as between them in policy implementation, especially between DfE, DCMS and DSIT.

Over the last decade of a Conservative government we have seen the devaluing of creative education through multiple policy initiatives within DfE. In schools the impact of Progress 8, the English Baccalaureate (eBacc), and funding squeezes in schools means creative subjects are now being taught far less, by less qualified teachers and fewer arts examinations are being taken by young people. Higher education has seen successive funding cuts to arts courses and is constantly exposed to the oversimplified rhetoric of low-value courses.

One of this country's greatest assets is its diversity of higher education providers. We have a strong history of high-quality (and often world-leading) specialist creative institutions which is admired throughout the world. However, sector diversity is under threat if we do not change the way we view the value of creative graduates. We are in a skills crisis with high levels of unemployment and job vacancies: creative skills are vital to the upskilling and futureproofing of all industries of work. Equality of student opportunities is also at risk in the emerging crisis to access creative education. Without strong creative education, we are in danger of not being able to sustain our creative industry, nor provide our young people with worthwhile and important skills for their whole lives regardless of their socioeconomic background.

This report address the challenge of defining creative graduates' value by critiquing current methods and provides an alternative narrative of the value of creative graduates and their skills such as:

- the unique impact of creative degrees and creative pedagogy
- the specialist and transferable skills that service all sectors, including the creative industries
- the complex nature of the creative work system including self-employment, portfolio careers, freelancing and entrepreneurship
- the significant contribution specialist creative institutions make to their places, both culturally and economically
- the ways creative skills support health and wellbeing for everyone in society

We also identify what's missing from the current discussions:

- strong careers/alumni tracking and longitudinal data of creative graduates
- public perceptions of creative careers are misinformed, and more investment is needed in careers Information, Advice and Guidance (IAG)
- recognition in policymaking that that the creative industries are broad and dynamic, and do not conform to typical career trajectories
- a discussion of the impact of creative skills in innovation/SMEs and wider business interaction

To address these challenges we have put together a series of recommendations for higher education providers, policymakers and industry to help realign the perception of the value of creative graduates and ensure there is equality of access and opportunities for individuals to develop their creative skills and choose a creative career. The full series of recommendations can be found on pages 58-61 and include:

- Developing a national graduate attributes document to frame the pedagogical approach for students and businesses to understand the transferable skills we develop through creative degrees;
- Recognising the value of the arts to science, technology, productivity and economic growth by embedding the ideology of 'STEAM' (rather than STEM) in national skills policy initiatives;
- For creative businesses to commit to more purposeful engagement with the higher education sector and strengthen reporting on the impact of graduates on industry growth;
- For non-creative industries to better articulate the value of creative skills to their productivity, growth and innovation activities publically;



- Developing more robust processes for capturing the careers of higher education creative arts graduates, whilst equipping those graduates to better communicate their skills, competencies and attributes which are valued by a wide range of employers;
- For government and regulators to rethink the current 'value' measures of graduates such as highly skilled and salary metrics which do not capture the full significance of creative graduates to industry or society nor the value of creative higher education study to the individual;
- Ensuring sustainable funding models for specialist creative providers to secure the pipeline of creative skills vital for sustained economic growth and social value, which will also protect the diversity of the globally-valued UK higher education sector.



Introduction

Creative degrees are a core offer of many of our specialist and non-specialist members. Our members are also often situated in areas of economic deprivation (such as rural and coastal areas) or areas not well serviced by other higher education provision. Overall our members deliver 37% of the country's creative graduates. Creative education can be transformational to both individuals and local communities if the value of creative skills is taken seriously. Culture and creative activities have also been shown to play an instrumental role in levelling up regions of this country. We are therefore concerned by the way in which successive policy interventions within the school and university sector have impacted the reputation and resources available to deliver our world-leading creative education and industry.

The Conservative government of 2023 committed to continuing to support growth within the creative sector in the Creative Industries Sector Vision, but the reality is we have seen a continued decline in educating our population with creative skills both within the school system and those undertaking university degrees. Labour have made a commitment to creative education in their Manifesto and Labour Creatives work; we look forward to working with the new government to implement these ideas into practice.

The decline of arts education

The pipeline problem begins with the changes made to school performance through the exclusion of creative subjects from the eBacc and Progress/Attainment 8 measurements of school performance. This coupled with real-term cuts to school budgets has led to a decline in the quantity and quality of teaching arts-based subjects. The Cultural Learning Alliance Report Card notes that arts subjects are now taught for 23% fewer hours than in 2010 and that there has been a 42% decline in arts GCSE entries between 2010 to 2023 plus a 21% decline in arts A Level entries between 2010 to 2023.

The Policy and Evidence Centre study of creative teaching in schools in 2022 argues that “a creative education and teaching for creativity pedagogies provide significant benefits for young people by supporting the growth of technical skills for working in creative industries, general employability and transversal capabilities for wider employment sectors”. Creative jobs are also some of the least at risk from AI and automation. Furthermore, findings from a Cultural Learning Alliance research project found that participating in creative education increases cognitive abilities (including Maths and English attainment), educational outcomes and better health.

In 2021 we undertook our own analysis of the qualifications applicants to creative courses held when they applied via UCAS. We found that there has been a decline in applicants who hold more than one arts qualification (A Level, BTEC or other creative qualification) when applying to university and the sharpest decline is seen from those in the least advantaged areas of the country. The most advantaged in society are more likely to hold any arts qualification, and the least advantaged less likely to be able to access arts qualifications. Whilst the Department for Culture Media and Sports Cultural Education Plan aims to “support all children and young people to access high-quality cultural education and tackle disparities in opportunity and outcomes in cultural education”, curriculum design and school delivery are out of scope for the work. To address this, the Labour Party have set out in their Education Plan a commitment to “put creativity front and centre of the curriculum” through various reforms including updating Progress 8 to include arts subjects and an extensive curriculum review. Similarly, the Liberal Democrats in their Fair Deal policy have committed to investing in creative skills and reforming the English Baccalaureate (eBacc) to include creative subjects.

But it is not only arts within the curriculum that is beneficial. Indeed historically, the Conservative government's response to the decline in formal creative education in school is that creative activities are well placed to be delivered as part of after-school clubs. Research by the Education Policy Institute (EPI) finds that participation in extracurricular activities at secondary school is associated with better future outcomes, with arts clubs participation having a stronger impact than sports activities. However, access to extracurricular activity is not universally available. The research cites vulnerable students are less likely to attend clubs for arts and music when compared to their peers and young people in independent schools are much more likely to attend extra-curricular arts and music than those in other schools.

The decline in the population who hold a formal qualification or have access to develop their creative skills is concerning as the world of work changes. The creative industry continues to grow as one of the UK's leading areas of economic growth and creative skills are core to improving UK productivity throughout our workforce. It is unacceptable for access to arts and culture to remain a privilege for the few.

Impact on the pipeline

Higher education is a major (if not most important) supplier of skills to the creative industries. For example, the 2020 PEC report For Love or Money showed that 82% of graduates working in design, 78% in music, performing and visual arts and 75% in architecture hold a creative degree.



Other technical education routes such as apprenticeships are mostly unworkable within the creative sectors due to the flexible nature of the jobs within the industry. But perhaps because of the devaluing of creative education in schools, we are seeing a troubling decline in the take-up of creative degrees. The recent House Of Lords Communications and Digital Committee inquiry therefore concluded that the government needs to do far more to improve the reputation and uptake of creative qualifications to secure the industry's future as a chronic skills shortage already exists.

The creative sector is a powerhouse within the UK:

- According to official government statistics, the creative industry brings in £108 billion a year to the UK economy, employs over 2.4 million people and has grown at more than 1.5 times the rate of the wider economy over the past decade.
- Total creative industries service exports were worth £45.6bn in 2021, compared to total creative industries services imports of £26.9bn and accounted for 15.9 per cent of all UK service exports.
- Culture and creative activities also play an instrumental role in levelling up regions of the UK.
- The creative industries has been identified by the Treasury as one of the 5 priority key sectors that help to grow the economy.
- Productivity within the arts and cultural sector was greater than that of the economy as a whole between 2009 and 2016, with gross value added per worker at £62,000 for arts and culture compared to £46,800 for the wider UK economy.
- The UK has four of the top 10 most visited museums in the world, more than any other country (CIC).

If education policy continues to devalue creative skills we are in danger of not keeping up with the skills needs of our fastest-growing industry, or tackling the wider UK productivity crisis in future generations. Indeed, many creative skills are already on the UK shortage occupation list including programmers and software development professionals, animators, set designers, riggers, stereo artists, and texture artists.

This why we are a founding partner of the #ArtsEssential Creative Education Manifesto which has brought together education providers and the creative sector to call for the protection of the creative arts talent pipeline.



Current measurement of value and the impact on higher education providers

Not only have we seen cuts and a deprioritisation of creative education in schools, but in higher education we have seen policies which destabilise and disrupt the delivery of creative education. The government's 'low-value courses' rhetoric subtly attacks those with creative qualifications as it defines value simply in terms of the economic benefit to the individual rather than to the economy as a whole, or the wider benefits of creative skills to the health, wellbeing and productivity of the nation.

Subsequently, we have seen significant cuts to the creative arts portions of HE Grant Funding, and the removal of London weighting in the methodology. Whilst there is a World Leading Specialist Grant (of which there are a number of creative specialists in receipt of funding) and in 2023 a one-off performing arts specialist initiative fund which recognised the value of creative specialist institutions not in receipt of the world leading stream, there is no guarantee these will continue and this instability jeopardises the future of creative specialist institutions.

Not only do creative specialists service the needs of industries by providing a high-quality, immersive and practice-led approach to teaching and learning, but those outside London play a vital role in providing cultural and creative opportunities to regions across the country that lack investment and cultural capital. In this report we will highlight some of the ways in which creative specialist institutions outside London have been essential to regional growth and levelling up.

Arts graduates routinely have some of the lowest salaries of any industry and the [IFS analysis](#) of salary data showed that for the most part, the lifetime earnings of creative graduates are not much higher than for non-graduates. But more detailed research undertaken by [NESTA and the Policy and Evidence Centre](#) has found that using earning metrics alone does a disservice to capturing the value of creative degrees. In 2018, we commissioned London Economics to investigate the impact of the limitations of the Longitudinal Educational Outcomes (LEO) methodology. This report found that there are [several significant issues with the data](#) which make it unfair to compare creative graduate earnings with other graduate employment routes. The research clearly shows that arts qualifications support the high-level creative skills necessary to flourish in creative roles across the economy and also support creativity in other sectors.



We aim in this report to provide a more nuanced understanding of the value of creative graduates which takes account of their future career prospects inside and outside of the creative sectors, health and wellbeing and the value of creativity in placemaking and communities. We also identify where creative skills alleviate societal inequalities, although we are concerned that the industry still needs a stronger commitment to diversifying its workforce.

Crucially, this report also provides an account of what creative pedagogies actually are and the transferable skills developed during a creative degree as we believe this is not well understood by policymakers, nor some business leaders.

Methodology

As well as drawing on published resources from government, creative organisations, research groups and businesses, we use several national data sets in our analysis of what we know about where creative graduates go and their onward value. These include:

1. The [HESA Graduate Outcomes](#) data split over 4 years by:
 - ALL subjects at all HEIs
 - CAH 24 and 25 (media, journalism and communications and design & creative and performing arts)
 - Creative specialist institutions as defined by OfS Typologies

We supplemented this with an [analysis](#) undertaken by AGCAS, and JISC.

2. An analysis of the Longitudinal [Educational Outcomes data](#) which looks at subject studied and industry profession and salary 1, 3, 5 and 10 years after graduation. We supplemented this with [DCMS data](#) and analysis by the [Creative Policy and Evidence Centre](#).

We also surveyed GuildHE and UKADIA members to better understand how they track graduate outcomes outside the formal data published by the sector and DfE/DCMS.



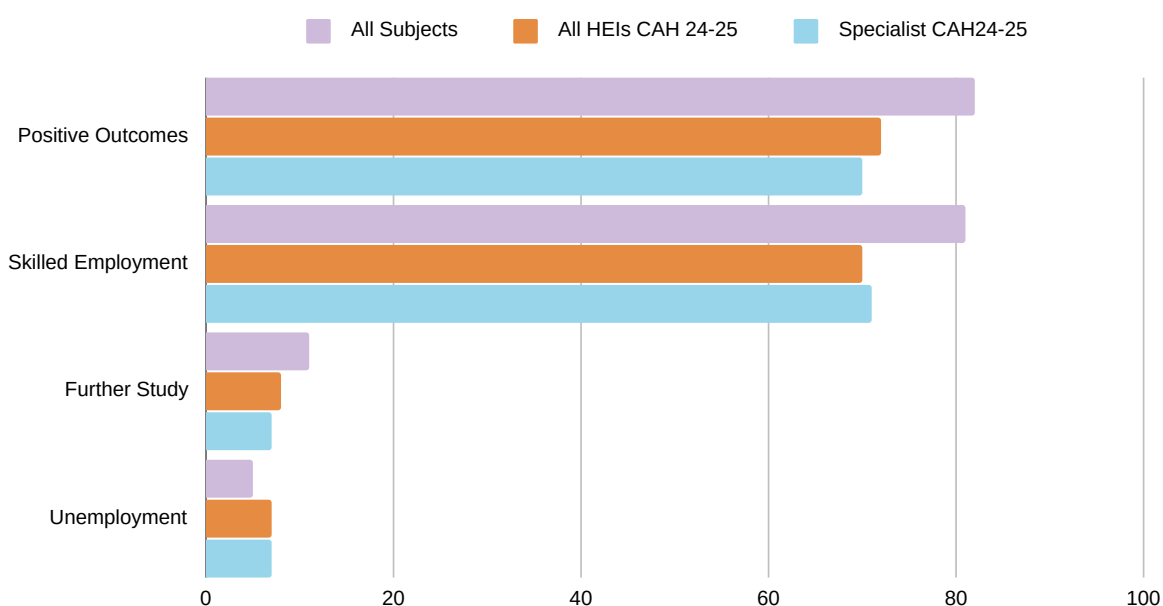
Data analysis of graduate careers

Graduate outcomes

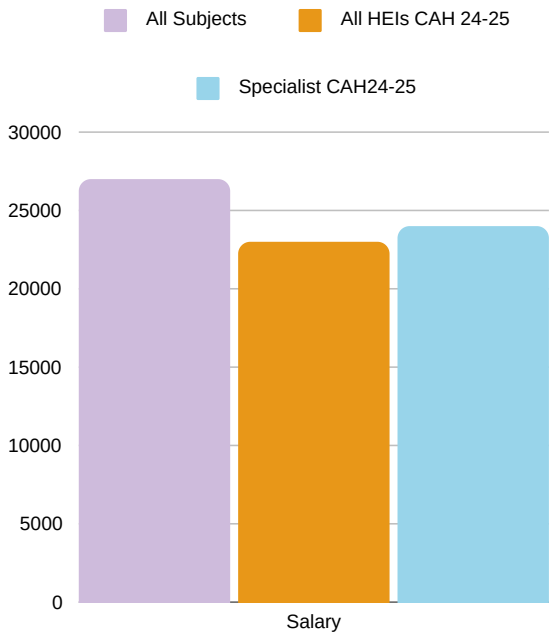
The [Graduate Outcomes Survey](#) is a national survey undertaken by the Higher Education Statistics Agency who annually survey students graduating from HE institutions. The survey takes place 15 months after the completion of a graduate's course and asks a series of questions relating to their employment, further study and wellbeing. The data is used by the Office for Students to regulate student outcomes, ensuring that higher education providers offer courses which lead to positive study and employment opportunities. The data can be broken down by subject studied as well as other demographic characteristics. Helpfully, the survey collects data about multiple employment or employment-related activities undertaken by graduates. This includes portfolio development which is an especially important outcome for creative graduates.

We can see from the headline data that when you compare creative graduates to all graduates there is a sense that they have slightly worse positive outcomes in the 15-month period. They also earn on average less compared to all graduates as a whole. However, our research suggests that creative graduates are less likely to report they are in skilled employment or further study and that their current activity overall is positive.

% in each outcomes 15 months post graduation



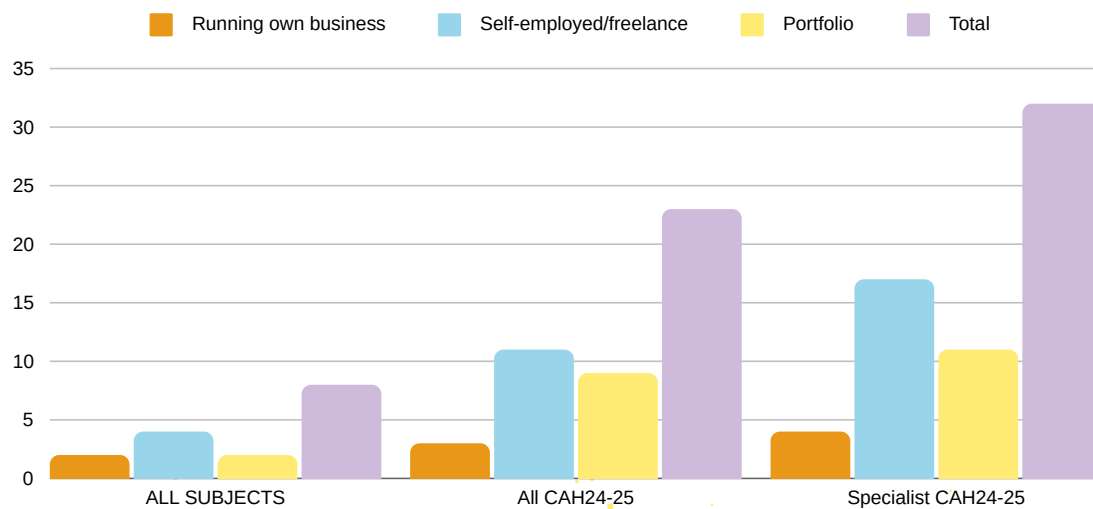
Salary



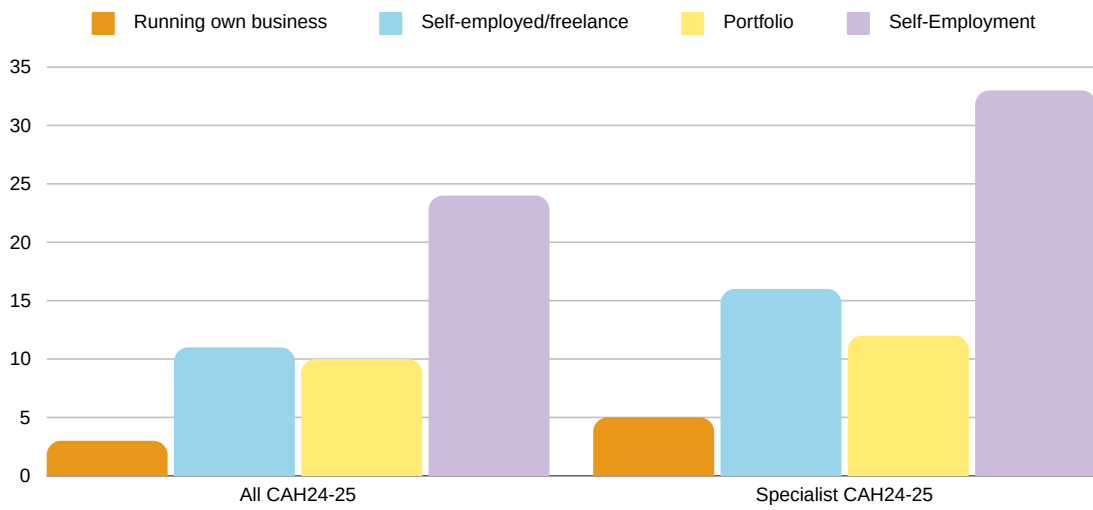
The average starting salary for all graduates in 2020-21 was £27,000. For those who studied creative subjects the average was £23,00 and for those studying in a specialist institution, it was £24,000.

However, as we will show through this report it is more challenging to correctly identify the outcomes of students from creative courses due to the complicated nature of creative careers which means that it is often unfair to compare their outcomes to the wider graduate cohort. For example, a very large proportion of creative graduates go on to self employment. This is defined as running their own business, being a freelancer or having a portfolio career. Just 8% of all graduates in 2020-21 were self employed compared to 23% of creative graduates and 32% of those creative graduates studying in specialist HEIs. Of these, the majority (17%) were already working for themselves as a freelancer.

Self employed/freelance

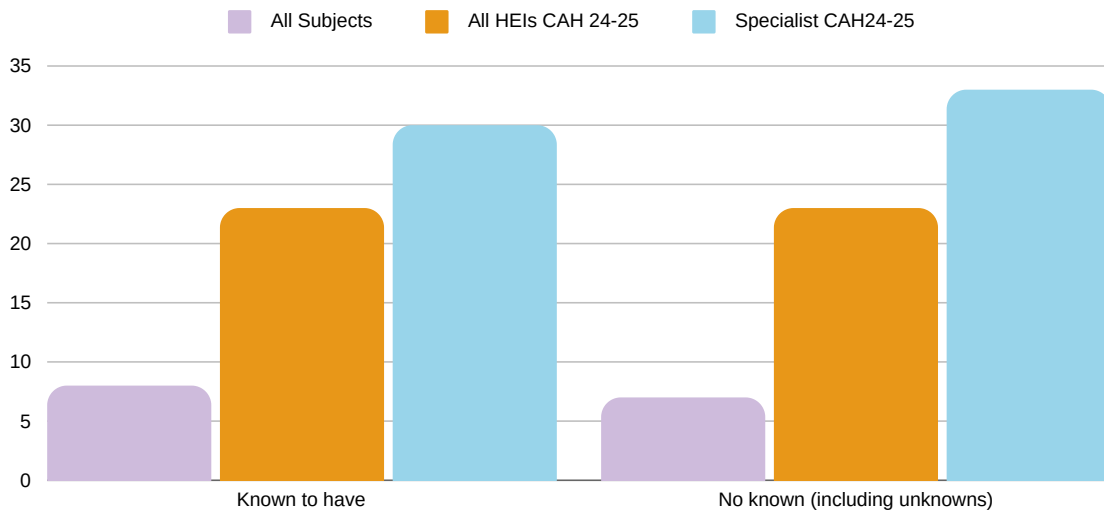


4 year trend

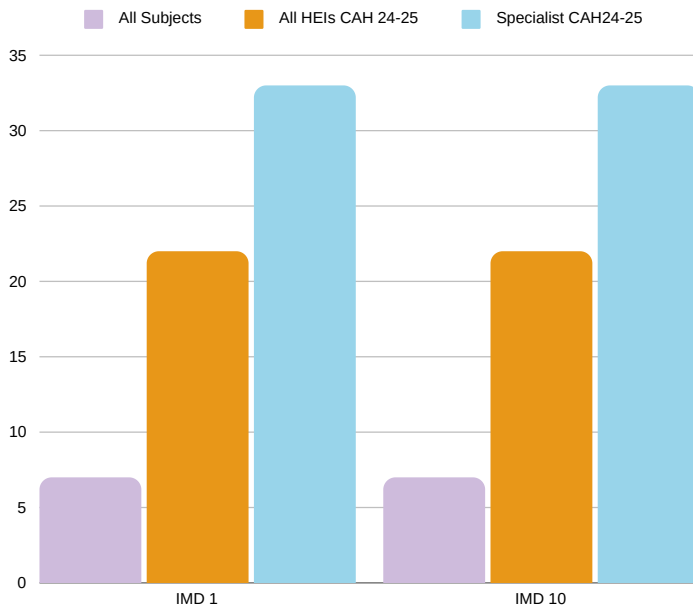


Interestingly, when this data is split by social economic factors, or by students with disabilities, we see that self-employment is still a substantial career path for these creative graduates:

Disability: self-employment (all)



IMD: Self-Employment (all)

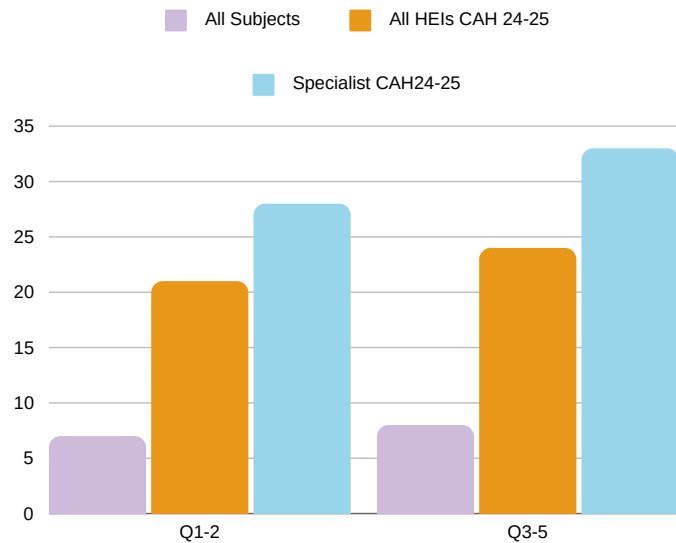


Graduate outcome data can also be split by socio-economic factors. Here we can see that self-employment is a widespread graduate outcome for creative graduates compared to the student population as a whole and is not significantly different for those from lower socioeconomic backgrounds.

The Indices of Multiple Deprivation (IMD) measure is an area measure split into 5 quintiles, with 1 being the most disadvantaged and 5 being the most advantaged.

POLAR: Self-Employment (all)

The participation of local areas (POLAR) classification groups areas based on the proportion of 18-19 year olds who participate in higher education. Quintile 1 shows the lowest rate of participation and Quintile 5 shows the highest rate of participation.

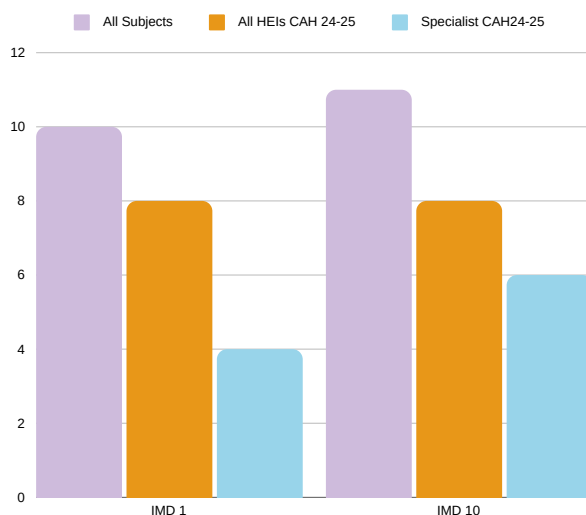


This is an important finding as it is often assumed that those from a less advantageous background are unable to take the same risk of self-employment at the start of their careers. However, this data indicates that creative courses provide the necessary skills and confidence for all creative graduates – regardless of their background – to engage in self-employed or freelance activity. Specialist HEIs, in particular, prepare graduates for this type of employment activity which is essential for many careers in the creative industry. It is no wonder then that initial salary information shows creative graduates earning lower than their counterparts.



Prospects also undertake an analysis of the Graduate Outcomes Survey (GOS) on behalf of the sector and produce an annual Graduate Market Trends Report. The [2023 report](#) looked at the GOS data from 2020-21 and found that completing a creative arts postgraduate course can lead to higher graduate earnings in the creative industries. However, we know at present that creative graduates are far less likely to enrol on a postgraduate course directly after their undergraduate degree, compared to the broader student population.

IMD: Further Study



The Indices of Multiple Deprivation (IMD) measure is an area measure split into 5 quintiles, with 1 being the most disadvantaged and 5 being the most advantaged.

Although the number of postgraduate students are relatively small in creative subjects we are particularly concerned that the high-cost subject funding subsidy administered by the regulator to support postgraduate creative subjects has been defunded. This demonstrates a fundamental misunderstanding of the value of creative graduates by policymakers and could damage the talent pipeline on which creative industries depend.

The Prospects report also analyses creative graduate outcomes at a more granular level by subject and specific industries entered into. Although it may seem employment is lower for creative graduates at the start of their career, when combining those who are working directly within the creative industries with those reporting to be self-employed or developing a portfolio, this amounts to 78.8% of creative graduates and exceeds the average across all subjects (76.1%).

Furthermore, creative graduates show consistently higher multiple employments than other graduates. Those who have had two or more jobs since graduation are consistently higher, and those working five or more jobs (1.7%) are significantly higher than the average across other subjects (0.4%) for all graduates. This provides strong evidence that creative graduates have a very different career trajectory than the average graduate, either because they are already working as self-employed freelancers with multiple employers, and/or because they supplement their portfolio and skills development with casual work.

Longitudinal Graduate Outcomes data

As well as the Graduate Outcomes survey which takes place 15 months after graduation, there used to be a survey which followed graduates 3.5 years after graduation. The Creative Industries Policy and Evidence Centre '[For Love or Money?](#)'(2020) report looked at the findings from this and found:

- 73% of creative graduates working in the creative industries report that they took their job, at least in part, because it was exactly the type of job they wanted or it fitted into their career plans compared with only 66% of graduates working elsewhere in the economy
- Three and a half years after graduation a higher proportion of creative graduates are in 'graduate level jobs' than law, biology and psychology graduates and, when controlling for demographic, attainment and work-related characteristics, there is no statistical difference on the effect on average earnings between studying a creative subject and studying biology, languages, or psychology subjects.

This report also hypothesises that the differences in earnings between creative and non-creative graduates can be partially explained by the desires and motivations of graduates. Creative graduates have an overwhelming preference to work in a creative job and are less focused on financial rewards. This can mean employers are not motivated to pay higher salaries to attract or retain creative staff.

Unfortunately, the sector no longer has access to a national longitudinal study of graduate outcomes so we are now reliant on government and third-party sources to map the long-term employment trends of graduates.

Tax data - Longitudinal Graduate Outcomes

The [Longitudinal Educational Outcomes](#) (LEO) data takes information from HMRC tax data and compares it to the educational records of individuals. This is broken down by level of qualification and subject studied. The records also include other demographic information such as sex, ethnicity and free school meal status.

To look at industry outcomes the LEO data compares subjects studied with the Office for National Statistics Standard Industrial Classification (SIC) to delineate occupational types. The percentage of graduates within each profession and their median salary from the 2021-22 tax data can be viewed in the following charts.



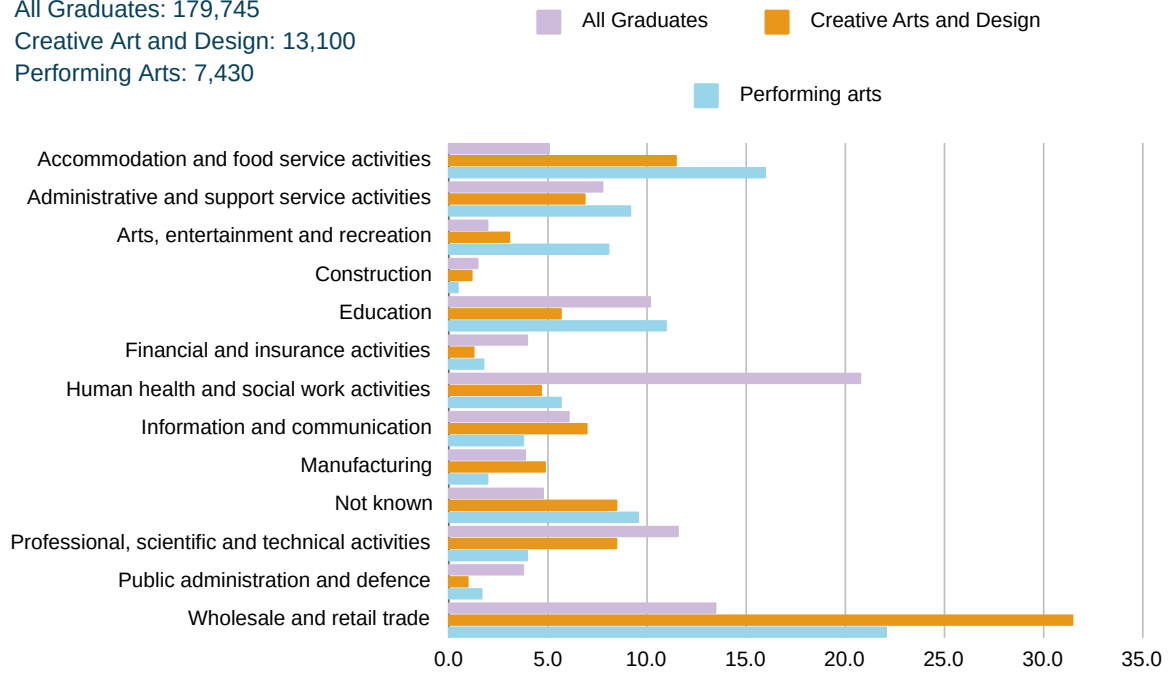
1 year after study: Occupation

Population Size

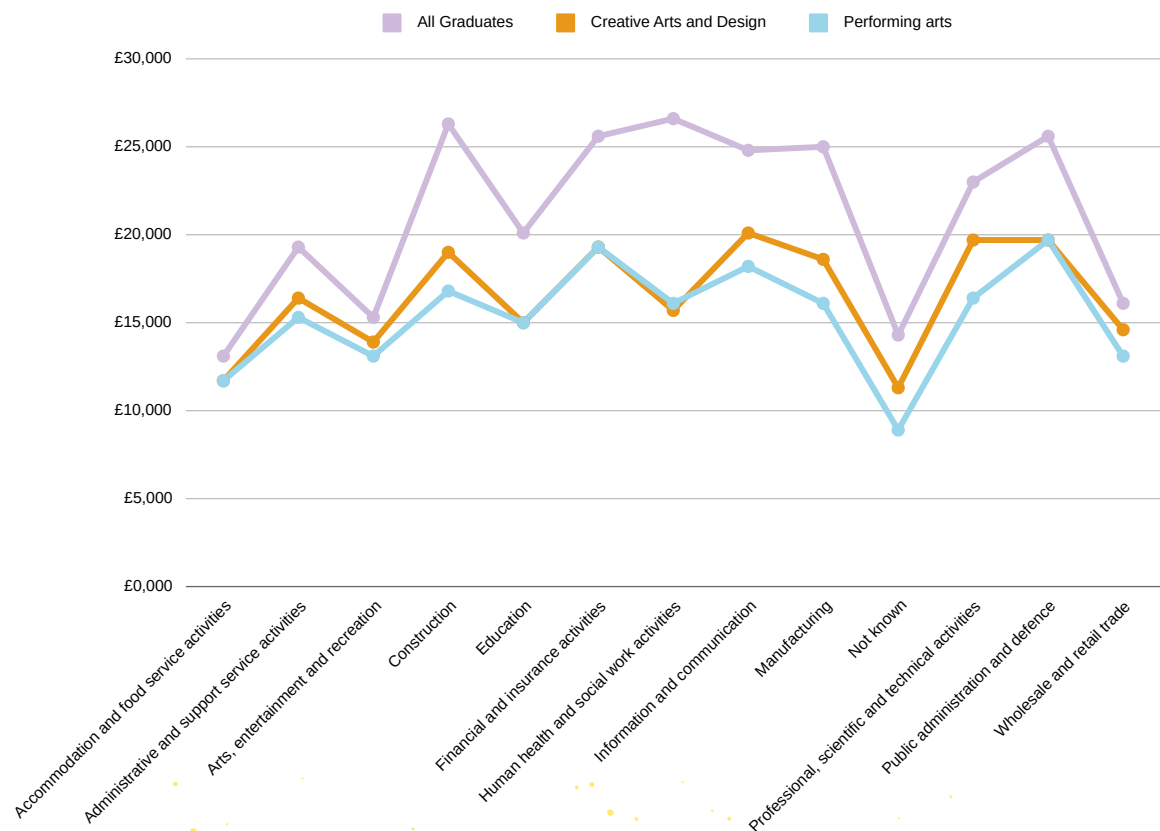
All Graduates: 179,745

Creative Art and Design: 13,100

Performing Arts: 7,430



1 year after study: Salary



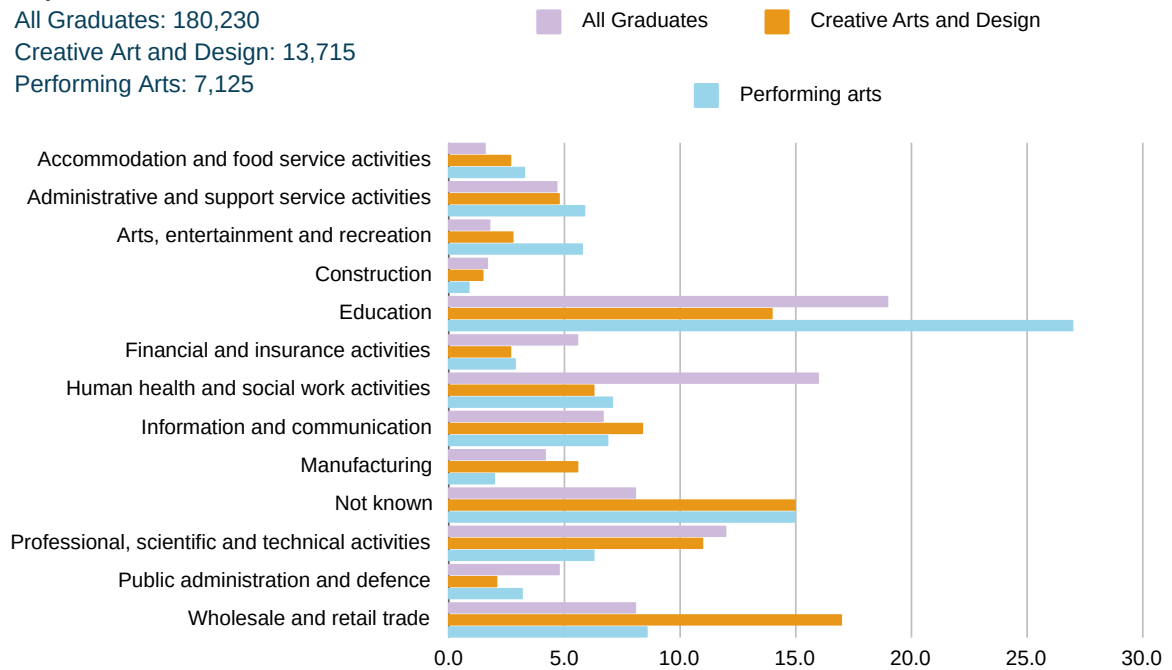
10 years after study: Occupation

Population Size

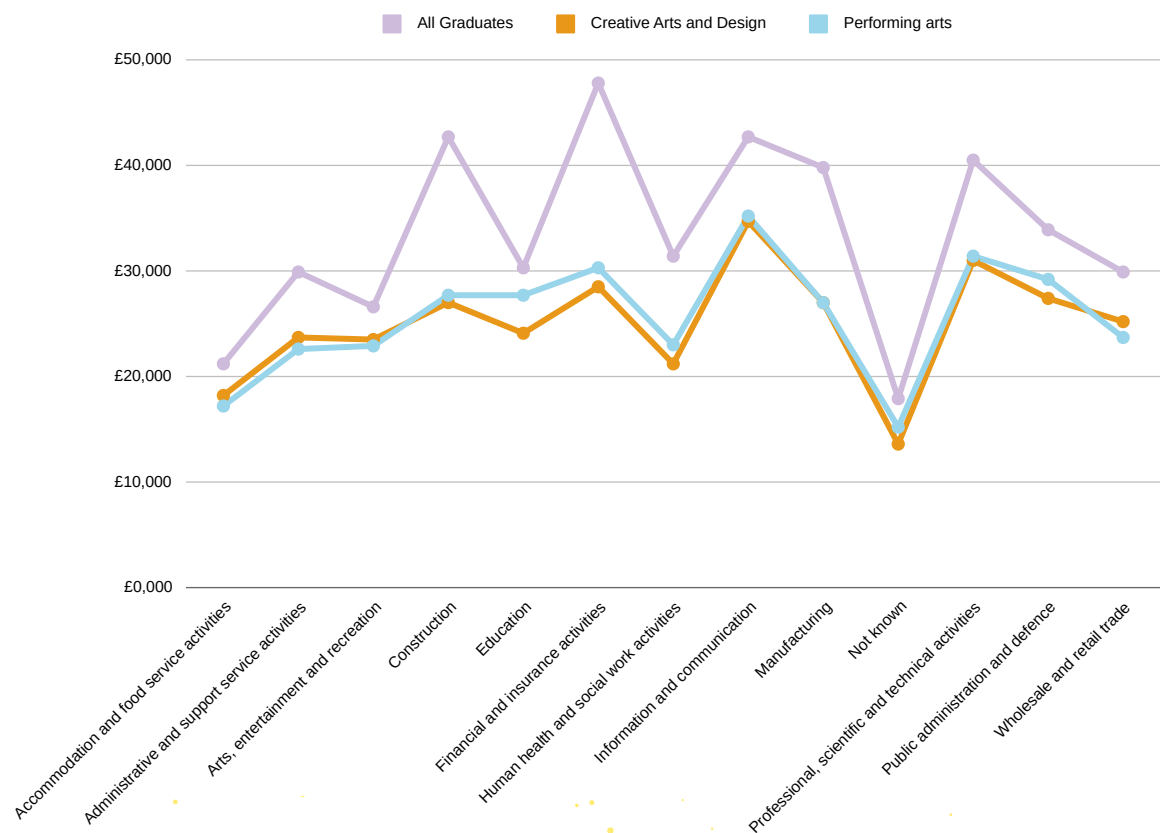
All Graduates: 180,230

Creative Art and Design: 13,715

Performing Arts: 7,125



10 years after study: Salary



From this data, we can see that creative graduates go into a variety of professions post-graduation. Although wholesale and retail have the greatest population of graduates, this significantly decreases over time. Tracking their careers long-term is challenging, as the unknown industry percentage (8.5 after 1 year and 15% after 10 years) is significantly higher than the national average (4.8 and 8.1% respectively).

Limitations of current data

For graduate outcomes, there are several limitations to the validity of the survey data.

- Firstly, the survey is based on a census model. This means that graduates can only report on their job activities on the day they completed the survey rather than reflecting on all of their work since leaving university. This is problematic for creative graduates who are routinely freelance workers whose skills are utilised in short contracts for multiple employers.
- The survey also allows graduates to provide information on multiple occupational activities. This is helpful but the way students select the 'most important' activity is highly subjective. It significantly impacts overall outcomes where students might be, for example, be working on portfolios or attending auditions but not classifying this as the 'most important' activity if they also work in retail which pays their bills.
- The reality of starting a creative career is that it may not always start at a 'graduate' level due to the nature of the industry itself. Creative careers often go through an extended period, often up to five years, where a mixture of employment, self-employment and speculative creative enquiry are combined. It is rare for a creative practitioner to be settled into a consistent and/or successful career profile within 15 months of graduation, as noted by the Graduate Outcomes Survey. This makes it incomparable to the majority of other typical graduate occupations.
- As shown in the analysis of Graduate Outcomes data, there is a very high number of creative graduates in start-ups/freelance roles. This means they inevitably earn less and the salaries can appear unfavourable compared to other occupations where there is little/no self-employment as a starting role.

There are also significant flaws in the LEO data, especially concerning creative careers. We commissioned London Economics in 2018 to investigate the impact of the limitations of the LEO methodology. The [report found](#) that there are several significant issues which make it unfair to compare creative graduate earnings with other graduate employment routes. These include:



- LEO does not account for the number of hours worked, it simply shows annual earnings. Therefore for those who undertake contractual work, part-time or casual work it is unclear how many hours were worked for the salary obtained. These flexible contracts are more likely in the creative sector and make their work seem less lucrative than full-time employment.
- Whilst self-employed earnings data is included in LEO analysis, dates of employment are not required. This means it is not possible to annualise earnings in a comparable way to earnings collected through the PAYE system.

Furthermore, LEO is published without the ability to benchmark for factors such as gender, ethnicity or regional variations. There are some very real societal inequities within all industries. Whilst it is good to highlight them, without benchmarking this weakens LEOs' role in making value judgements about certain professions or qualifications.

Occupation classification

National datasets like the Graduate Outcomes Survey and the LEO data use the Office for National Statistics Standard Industrial Classification (SIC) and Standard Occupational Classification (SOC) codes to delineate occupational types. As such the government and higher education regulator deem SOC codes 1-3 as "high level and highly skilled". Although SOC codes were updated in 2020 to account for changes in employer expectations of what constitutes a 'highly skilled' role, many jobs within the creative industries are very highly skilled versions of more everyday occupations. As such, data analysis often unfairly categorises many creative graduates as 'Low Skilled'. Our members routinely cite issues with the data which include:

- 'Show runners' are often classified in the same SOC category as 'lifeguards' as opposed to 'production roles'.
- All employment in the textile and garment trade is in SOC category 5, regardless of skill level. Fashion design is a graduate-level role (according to the industry) but is not always coded as such and there is inconsistency in coding roles such as 'admin buyers' and 'pattern cutters'.
- Wardrobe Assistants, Costumiers, and Costume Design for Television, Film and Stage are also not in SOC 1-3, even though this is a highly skilled job supporting a globally leading industry.
- Stylists, Photographers and Visual merchandisers are coded as Sales and Customer service occupations (7) regardless of where they do these roles.



Specific examples have also included:

- A trainee costume maker working at Warner Brothers coded as a sports and leisure assistant.
- Technical Theatre graduates working as Prop Makers are coded as a Skilled Manual Trade (SOC 5) while a graduate with the job title 'Set Designer' is coded as SOC 3
- Fashion Designers coded as 'tailors'.
- Visual Merchandisers coded as 'window dressers'.
- Hair, makeup and prosthetics for film, theatre and TV are coded as 'beauticians'.

The complexity of mapping the job title to the right SOC code has left academic staff and students not fully aware of how a job title may impact the outcomes of the survey data. Whilst there is a manual process for HEIs to challenge the unfair coding of graduates in the GO survey, this is time-consuming and is not always rectified. There is no ability to challenge coding in other data such as LEO. LEO also doesn't reflect the project based nature of many creative careers or where the role is highly skilled but low paid. Therefore, when reporting on the specific industry worked in it judges this to be where the most money has been made. It does not show how many graduates are working in multiple sectors.

Whilst improved career opportunities and higher salaries are not the only benefits of obtaining a degree, it is important for government, regulators, higher education institutions and students to have access to information on career trajectories and financial returns on investment. However, we believe that only using national tools to undertake analysis on the 'value' of creative graduates is doing a disservice to the immense personal, social and professional value of a creative degree. Not only is this because of the limitations within the datasets and the more transient nature of creative careers not being correctly captured. Creative skills are not just a subject to be learned like Law or Economics but provide a core skill to aid people in their personal and professional lives.

The next section of the report will therefore provide further details on what we mean by creative skills and how they are valued and used inside and outside creative careers plus how they benefit the individual and society.



The true value of creative graduates

Pedagogy

Studying a creative course is not just about learning a specific skill or craft such as painting, acting, coding or making music. Critical analysis of politics, culture, social behaviours and history exposes students to societal challenges and provides many flexible skill sets which are beneficial to a variety of jobs and life experiences such as originality, critical thinking, initiative, risk, team work practice and problem-solving.

Creative pedagogies often operate across craft, performance, design, digital and writing disciplines making graduates incredibly agile in how their skills can be harnessed throughout their lives. Due to many creative graduates going on to self-employment, as well as the subject-specific skills, they also enter the workforce with particularly strong business and enterprise skills. Through the creative pedagogy and its entrepreneurial conventions, students at specialist creative providers graduate with drive, tenacity and resourcefulness that make for highly productive and capable individuals. These supporting skills are invaluable to all sectors, including the creative industries, making these graduates some of the most versatile and agile members of the workforce. Understanding and measuring the impact of these skills and attributes is not straightforward. It requires a detailed understanding of the system of work, the skillsets of creative graduates and the skills needed for the future of work.

The British Academy and the University of the Arts London have undertaken extensive research into the skills landscape, both transferable and specialist across creative, arts, humanities and social science education.

Case Study: Skills Programme and research

The British Academy

The British Academy is the UK's national academy for the humanities and social sciences. They mobilise these disciplines to understand the world and shape a brighter future. The Academy's [Skills Programme](#) has demonstrated and celebrated the skills gained through studying SHAPE disciplines (Social Sciences, Humanities, and Arts for People and the Economy), and provides policymakers with evidence of the value of these skills to individuals, society and the economy, including the creative industries.

[SHAPE skills](#) are the vital, transferable skills developed through the study of SHAPE disciplines (see Figure 1). They include adaptability and creativity, problem-solving and independence, and are in demand throughout the UK economy, particularly in high-growth sectors.

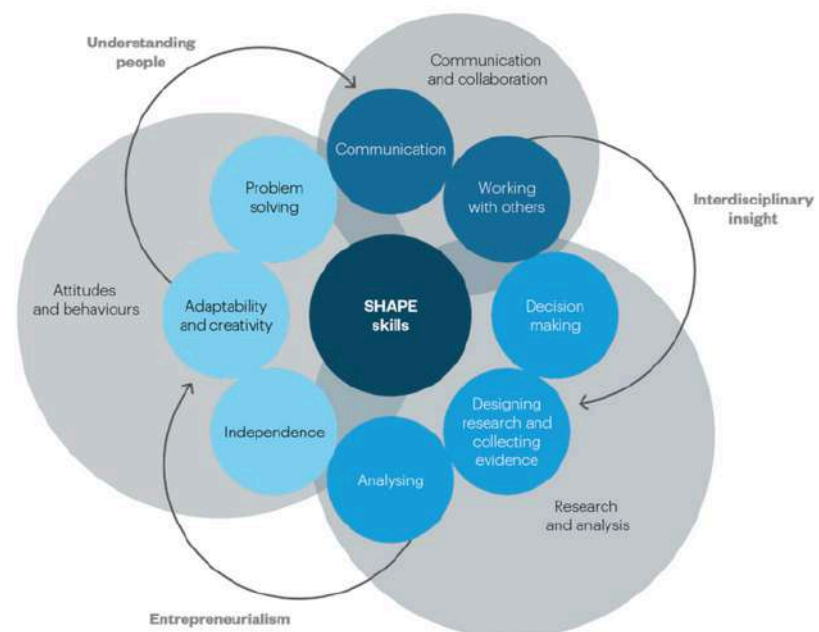



Figure 1: Core SHAPE skills as identified in *The Right Skills* (2017) and by case study participants, *SHAPE Skills at Work* (2022)



Their research highlights the impact of SHAPE skills for individuals in careers across a range of sectors. For example, a video and film editor, whose undergraduate degree in business management and master's degree in TV and film helped them develop vital creative, technology and project management skills.

Not limited to one career path, SHAPE disciplines play a particularly key role in the creative skills pipeline. They found that 25% of arts and humanities graduates go on to work in the creative sector, being three times more likely to be in a creative job than other graduates. SHAPE graduates are also vital to R&D and innovation across the services sector. In [Understanding SHAPE in R&D \(2023\)](#), case studies from Netflix, Accenture, Tesco and the Phoenix Group highlight the importance of combining expertise across STEM and SHAPE to deliver innovation.

The Academy's research has evidenced the demand for and benefits of SHAPE skills across the UK workforce, economy and society, both now and in the future. SHAPE skills and expertise will be vital in building the society we want to live in, helping individuals tackle the challenges we face and shape the future.

Case Study: University of the Arts London

Creative Attributes Framework

University of the Arts London has developed a Creative Attributes Framework (CAF) which demonstrates how the learning experience helps students and graduates develop ethical and wide-ranging qualities, abilities and behaviours to prepare for the future and sustain a rewarding professional life. The framework is divided into 3 capacities, each underpinned by 3 attributes. These attributes are in turn demonstrated through practices, skills, behaviours and abilities.



This project was funded by the Higher Education Academy (now Advance HE).



We support students to practice and apply their learning in a variety of situations, during their studies, in the workplace and in the community.



Proactivity – the initiative, hard work and passion required to make things happen in society, in the community, and in the workplace.



Enterprise - the mindset that takes measured risks and that perceives and creates opportunities, and the resourcefulness to pursue these opportunities in an ethical and sustainable way.



Agility – the ability to embrace rapid change and retain an open mind.

2 Showcasing abilities

We support students to collaborate and connect with others, to communicate their ideas and form narratives around their practice as well as develop the ability to listen and receive feedback.



Communication – the skills needed to present your work and ideas, to inspire others and respond to feedback.



Connectivity – the ability to collaborate with others, create networks and develop and contribute to communities of practice.



Storytelling – the ability to demonstrate your unique abilities and experiences to others in an engaging manner.

3 Navigating change

We equip students to manage ambiguity, thrive in uncertain futures and develop confidence in their abilities and the resilience to navigate change.



Curiosity – the enthusiasm to seek out new perspectives, to create and build on existing knowledge.



Self-efficacy – confidence in your abilities, and the ability to respond positively in various situations.



Resilience – the willingness to adapt and remain motivated, overcome obstacles, and deal with ambiguity, uncertainty and rejection.

Curriculum collaboration with industry

As addressed previously, transferable skills and versatility can be acquired through undertaking an arts-based, creative or humanities degree. However, a fundamental component of the pedagogical approach at specialist creative institutions is how industry actively contributes to the learning experience. This is conducted in a variety of ways including industry-informed curriculum design, industry practitioners engaging with students throughout their course (both as a one off and as permanent teaching staff) and the use of live briefs in teaching and assessment. Embedding methods to replicate professional settings in a safe and supportive educational environment is a significant part of our institutions' employability support. The governing bodies of our members also routinely include industry practitioners to ensure that the teaching and learning ethos is embedded in the whole culture of the provider.

Live briefs, in particular, are a fundamental part of the specialist creative teaching and learning experience but are not always well understood by those outside the sector. Specifically, live briefs are projects where students receive an assessment task directly from an employer, either to simulate what it is like to work with clients in the real world or – in many instances – these briefs are genuine commissioned activities, supported by their academic supervisors. These enable students to understand what is expected of them once they join the workforce, either in full-time or freelance employment.

Examples of live briefs from our members include:

- **Arts University Plymouth** BA (Hons) Textile Design graduate Ayesha King designed a wetsuit suitable for Muslim Women in collaboration with Finisterre's Seasuit Project which aims to give women and girls the freedom to follow their cultural requirements of covering their bodies whilst still embracing their love for water sports. [This product is now available to buy nationwide](#). Jo Bury, a designer for Finisterre and part of the judging panel said she was impressed by the students' approach to the project, *"They came extremely prepared with all the pieces well thought out, we were so impressed by how clearly they presented their ideas and designs"*.
- BA Fashion and Textiles students at **Norwich University of the Arts** worked with [Habitat](#) to craft an imaginative material collection tailored for a children's range or an innovative sustainable material or print, all while staying faithful to Habitat's brand identity.



"It's been amazing to work with students at Norwich and to see their individual approaches to the briefs. It was great to see how they responded to our feedback halfway through the project. There has been such great creative thinking on show in response to this industry brief." - Tasha Warren, Habitat Designer

"I've really enjoyed this project, it's been fun and fast-paced. It's been enjoyable to come out of my comfort zone and challenge myself to work towards something that Habitat would produce themselves and align my work with theirs. I've learnt that it's important to consider the elements that industry want to see from my portfolio boards and how I could develop my weaving for my final major project." - Melissa Seavers, Student

- BA (Hons) Creative Advertising students at **Leeds Arts University** were given the opportunity to pitch to creative agency Ride Shotgun, who set a competition brief for their client HSBC. The winners were given a two-week paid placement at Ride Shotgun, working on briefs and spending time gaining experience in different departments.

"Overall the two weeks at Ride Shotgun was a turning point for our career, we got to learn so many things about the industry and now have a confident idea of where we'd like to be in the future. It's exactly what you need just before graduating, we hope to see everyone again!" - Maia Johnston and Millie Addinall, BA (Hons) Creative Advertising students

"As a student, the time I spent working on live briefs in agencies was what landed me my first junior job. Working with Nick and the creative advertising students is a great way to pay it forward. It was hard to choose a winner from the brief we set, but Millie and Maia stood out to us. Their campaign had a great idea at the core, presented confidently and articulately. They were a joy to have on placement in our Leeds and Sheffield studios, tackling every brief with flair and enthusiasm. Well done guys, you smashed it!" - Ellen Jackson, Senior Copywriter at Ride Shotgun

- BA (Hons) Commercial Photography students at **Arts University Plymouth** have worked on a live brief creating promotional photography for Mercedes-Benz South West. The winner was offered an opportunity to work directly with the Mercedes-Benz South West marketing team, gaining invaluable industry experience.



"I've always had a keen interest in cars but never considered focusing on them with my photography, because it's such a competitive field. However, when Mercedes-Benz South West offered the opportunity to shoot for them in Royal William Yard, I really went for it and loved the experience. I've spent the summer since contacting car enthusiasts for photoshoots to refine my style and technique further. I'm in the first year of my degree and have already found something that I love and intend to pursue as part of my future career." - Josh, first year student winner

"It's been a pleasure to work with the Arts University on this project and we've all been so impressed with the standard of work that has been produced. Some of the photos have already been used for our new car campaigns - a testament to the quality of the work submitted." - Alice Poole, Digital Marketing Specialist at Mercedes-Benz South West

- BA (Hons) Games Art and Design and BSc (Hons) Games Development Students from **Norwich University of the Arts** created concept art and game designs in response to the positive impact of nature on mental wellbeing. Safe In Our World is a mental health charity focused on the video games industry. Their main goal is to create and foster worldwide mental health awareness within the sector, eliminating stigmas and enabling it as a topic of discussion. Steven Coltart, course leader set up the project with Safe In Our World exclusively for Norwich students. The brief challenged students to create either concept art or a short game inspired by the course leaders' piece of music '[With Nature](#)'.
- BA (Hons) Fashion Photography student from **Leeds Arts University** Ruby Willingham saw work she produced for swimwear brand Ezili as part of a live brief shared with an international audience as it went up on a billboard in Times Square in New York.



Case Study: Royal Central School of Speech and Drama

Collaborative Outreach Unit

Second year students undertake a collaborative outreach unit which enables students to take their learning out of the classroom and into community contexts. As part of this process, student teams are supported by an expert practitioner from the BA (Hons) Drama, Applied Theatre and Education course team and the broader applied theatre industry to supervise their project, providing advice and guidance. Students focus on performance making in diverse settings such as community centres, parks, prisons, pupil referral units, refugee camps, hospitals, playgrounds, schools and nursing homes, in the UK and abroad. Such innovative work aims to bring about change in communities and participants from all walks of life. As a part of their studies, many students have the opportunity to travel and explore the use of drama in diverse community settings. In recent years, students have undertaken projects in places such as New York, Johannesburg, Bulawayo, Hong Kong, Santiago de Chile and Mumbai. Most of this work is undertaken in partnership with international arts organisations, which work closely with course tutors and students to design, develop and deliver projects.

Case Study: Falmouth University

BE Good Agency

Falmouth University has an In-House Agency called BE Good which is an academic-led, student-driven creative agency and research area within the School of Communication at Falmouth University. The mission is to influence consumer behaviour and create positive change through the ethical application of behavioural economics (BE), whilst supporting students to obtain real-world experience through live briefs. An example is creative solutions to tackle violence against women.

“Safer Cornwall is thrilled to have this chance to think creatively around tackling Violence Against Women and Girls, and to work with world-leading Falmouth University in this space.” - Cornwall Council

Specialist facilities and services

Another offer that is unique to our creative institutions is the specialist equipment and facilities which are used to teach students, and often remain accessible to recent graduates and practising creatives within the community. The use of these facilities in the curriculum develops student understanding of different aspects of creative practice, offers insight into professional practice and allows them to be playful in their assessment.

Access to these facilities, studios, equipment, rehabilitation equipment for injury, practice space or specialist archives is paramount for creative practitioners after graduation due to the shorter-term or 'gig' system in many parts of the creative industry. Without the capability to maintain practice, especially in the first couple of years in the workforce, graduates would be considerably less likely to obtain employment.



Examples of this graduate support include:

- **Ravensbourne University London** actively encourages their students to use the full spectrum of facilities, including their TV studio, fashion and textiles labs and prototyping suite
- **Arts University Bournemouth** [Drawing Studio](#) which is accessible to students from all courses across the university enabling all creative artists, working in any genre, to be in the same space together, from costume designers to architects, animators to teachers

- **Falmouth University** offers a hire service to graduates and the community to lease equipment and space in the disciplines of Music, Theatre, Television Photography, Computer Games and Fashion, alongside a start-up and growth incubator LaunchPad Futures.
- **Leeds Arts University** Funded Studio Spaces offer recent graduates the chance to start, develop and grow their business or creative practice within a creative, collaborative studio space. Residencies range from 4 weeks up to 9 months
- **The National Centre for Circus Arts** ensures that their studios and equipment are open to the whole professional circus community to support rehearsals and craft maintenance between jobs and for preparedness for auditions at low cost



Engaging the public

A unique benefit delivered by creative institutions is the opportunity for the public to attend degree shows and performances. These events can be a catalyst for inspiring and informing local and sectoral publics, and prospective students, about the art, design or performance fostered at the university. These provide exciting annual events in the local community, whether that be a small town or large city. Graduates have a platform to showcase their portfolio of work in a real-life setting, with feedback from the public.



Due to the nature of art, design and performance, the final showcase is fundamental to the pedagogy of the programme, as graduates may go on to show their practice in exhibition spaces, galleries and on stage, for the public. This is an opportunity for final year students to hone their communication skills and create work that engages viewers, and often potential employers. For example, Illustration graduate Matthew Brazier from **Norwich University of the Arts** was commissioned by Time Out magazine based on his final degree show. There are very few degrees that offer the opportunity for students to engage the public in their assessments, but for creative courses it is fundamental to the craft.

Arts University Bournemouth are also further engaging the public having recently acquired a historic local theatre which is being refurbished with rehearsal and educational space and a 400-seat auditorium. The first show will bring together industry professionals with students studying acting, costume and set design with the view to continue to use this space as both a learning and public engagement tool.

Economic impact and employability

Over the last 15 years, the creative industries sector has grown at a rate more than twice that of the whole UK economy: arguably an industrial revolution. The economic contribution of these graduates to the overall financial health and buoyancy of this country should therefore be undeniable. However, the nature and style of this system of work is not well understood on a national level, leaving gaps in our collective ability to fulfil its potential. A vast number of the workforce are self-employed or freelancers, either by choice or by necessity due to industry standards. For example, work in performing arts, visual arts, theatre, costume design and film/TV is almost wholly a gig economy system, where employment is never permanent and often not full-time. The style, pace and maintenance of work in these industries is complex and unconventional compared to a typical graduate job and career environment. To understand the true economic impact of creative education, we must better understand the state of employability in the industry, its conventions and the ways creative education contributes to employment outside of the creative industries too.

The system of creative work

One of the primary outcomes of higher education is to achieve meaningful employment after graduation. As noted at the beginning of this report there are concerns about the way in which creative graduate outcomes are measured in national statistics that miss the diversity of routes graduates take to access work.



The creative industries are a complex web of traditional performance and craft as well as technology, media culture and heritage. Graduates have an abundance of opportunities to utilise their creative skills within a variety of different employers and situations.

Employment therefore looks different across the creative industries. There are various routes to work that rely on individuals maintaining multiple activities at once. This may be for financial stability, but may also be to maintain skillsets, prepare for new work opportunities or due to multidisciplinary jobs. Some creative graduates, like other graduates, can enter the workforce through the typical route of full-time permanent employment that affords them the stability and experience to apply for another job when they wish to progress to a new employer. However, most creative graduates enter a job market that does not afford this stability. Instead, many subsectors of the creative industries necessarily operate with more precarity and within a system that often relies on its people to maintain consistent employment outside of the industries to support living costs, or to stack short-term contracts. This system has other atypical characteristics such as:

- Short-term employment (eg projects, theatre productions, exhibitions, tours, seasonal work)
- Frequency need to obtain employment (eg creative graduates often need to apply, audition, interview, network or send portfolios multiple times a year to stack jobs)
- Type of work (eg multidisciplinary creatives often hold many types of creative work simultaneously)
- Maintaining preparedness to obtain work (eg maintaining fitness or rehearsing for auditions, refreshing portfolios, sending applications on a frequent basis)

These characteristics form a complex employment landscape for the creative industries, making it much more difficult to measure employment outcomes as it is constantly shifting in any given time period. It does, however, demonstrate the vitality of the system, as well as the skills that the creative workforce must foster throughout their careers to navigate it.

Create Britain is a tool that aims to support creative individuals to do this by focusing on enabling users to dynamically promote their skills to potential employers. This approach recognises and reflects the creative system of work and helps to visualise the skills, specialisms and availability of those seeking creative employment opportunities.



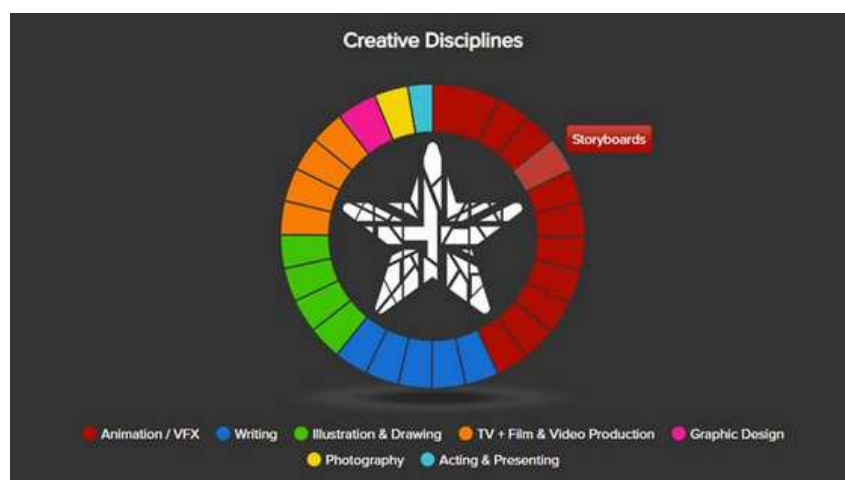
Case Study: creative talent search platform

Create Britain

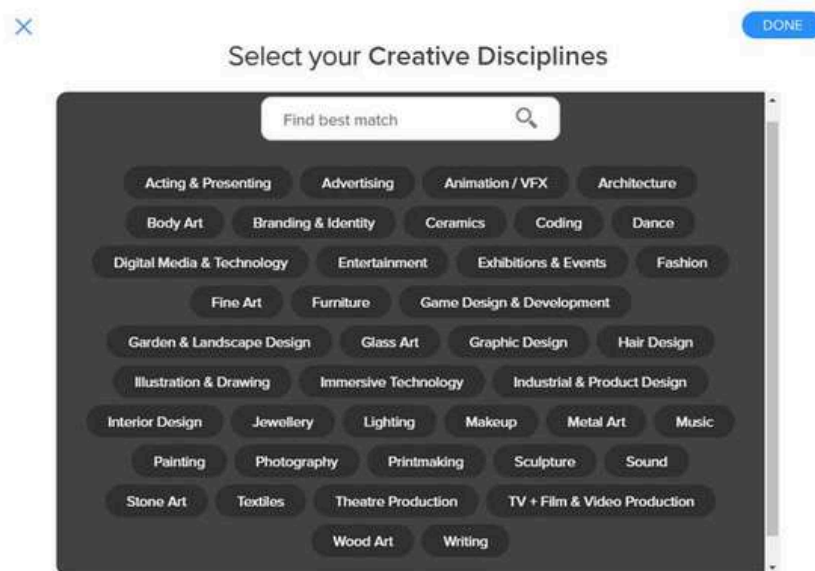
CREATEBritain

The creative industries are dynamic and complex. This makes it incredibly challenging to get exposure, develop a body of work and galvanise a career. Where have you worked? What was your job title? How long did you work there? are probably some of the least relevant questions to someone entering the creative workforce. Even harder is can you describe your creativity? Presenting high-impact audio, visual or immersive content as text is challenging, and not always within a creative's skillset. And some employers may not read a CV. To solve this problem, Richard and Johnathan developed a new tool - [CREATEBritain.com](https://createbritain.com).

It aims to reconstruct the CV to focus on 'skills liquidity'. By using indexing instead of algorithms, the platform breaks down areas of expertise, specialisms, software packages, styles, genres, etc. into granular detail, and allows creatives to showcase work in any format.



The search function by these skills enables all on the platform to be found by employers, many of whom don't have the internal resources to source talent from far and wide.



The platform therefore aims to open out exposure to all creative talent - not just those with the resources and connections to get noticed and the digital badges awarded during education, provide authenticity, and allow educators, awards bodies and future students to track and better understand career progression. Digital badges work both ways – for the first time providing Britain's 287k micro businesses with free, direct and real-time access to a continually replenished pool of potentially 200k creative graduates.

Create Britain received some funding from Innovate UK to develop this tool as part of the Department for Culture, Media and Sport supported [Create Growth Fund](#). Create Britain is also signposted by the OfS as part of their graduate employment and skills guidance for specialist job support.

To learn more about this project, please read their [blog on the GuildHE website](#).

Employment in the creative industries

As explored earlier in this report, graduates from higher education providers form the majority of the creative workforce. [Figures from the Department for Culture, Media and Sport \(DCMS\)](#) show that there were 3.1M filled job roles in the creative and cultural industries in the year up to September 2022.

Approaches to preparing our graduates for a career in the creative sector are typically manifested through three interwoven elements:

- The curriculum has been designed to equip students with essential employability skills. Sometimes this is achieved through co-design of the curriculum with employers, but also through the extensive use of live briefs, simulated industry tasks, guest lecturers, masterclasses and workshops.
- Specialist higher education institutions also have a very high proportion of teaching and research staff undertaking their own professional creative practice. This further exposes the learning and teaching environment to up-to-date employment practices and provides students with real-world knowledge of the work in the creative sector.
- Whilst at university, students also work towards the development of a professional portfolio of their work which is then used to gain employment, to provide examples of their skills and creative style.

However, there is evidence to suggest that there is a disconnect between the skills that are fostered during creative courses, and the skills that some creative employers expect of their employees. The Creative Industries Policy and Evidence Centre (PEC) found in their [Good Work Review](#) that whilst engagement from employers and industry professionals with the student and graduate experience is mutually beneficial for both the employer and education providers, that there is a systematic lack of engagement from employers in supporting the skills pipeline. It is vital that employers produce recommendations for education providers to help them to improve skills preparation for their skills needs if they are not being adequately met. The PEC recommends that we need to bring together academia, industry, and skills providers to update and enhance sector-focused provision and programmes in emerging skill areas if we are to coherently address the skills gaps.

Fostering a better culture of professional development, at both employers and education providers, is also recommended in the report. Many creative institutions provide shorter CPD courses which could support skills development in a more agile and effective way for employers. This could support other issues such as the pace of change in skills expectations in some sub-sectors of the creative industries.



In our research, some institutions reported discussions with employers about the length of the traditional degree programme missing out on skills shifts by the time a student graduates. Agility and adaptability will be vital to the improvement of the skills pipeline between schools, higher education and employers.

Self-employment in the creative industries

Unlike other industries, a great deal of creative jobs are undertaken on a freelance or contractual basis. DCMS believes that 32% of jobs in the creative sector are on a self-employed/freelance basis. This is more than double the rate of self-employment in the wider UK economy (14%).

The PEC published a report in 2021 entitled [Freelancers in the Creative Industries](#) which found that:

- 76% of creative industries companies in the survey had worked with a freelancer in the past year
- 41% of companies worked with as many or more freelancers than they had employees
- 47% of super micro (1-5 employees) companies worked with more freelancers than they had employees

As shown in our Graduate Outcomes data analysis many graduates immediately enter a creative profession through a freelance route; 23% of creative graduates and 32% of graduates from specialist institutions. The data therefore suggests that higher education institutions are supporting graduates into freelancing, a legitimate industry employment route, and graduates are confident to do so.

Many institutions directly support student transitions into work through incubator programmes. Incubators are designed to provide space, mentoring, skills development and opportunities to collaborate for start-ups and new business. Graduate start-ups often have exclusive or priority access to incubators which can support the development of new products, services, collaborations and creative problem solving through sharing ideas and energy. Some university incubators also offer support for the local community through workshops with the graduates and mentors.

The incubator model provides a physical hub that fosters collegiality and offers a continuation of the teaching and learning environment that students experience at university. Opportunities to develop the skills to challenge, investigate and critique ideas is an essential part of entrepreneurship training and prepares graduates to continue to grow their business beyond the incubator programme.



Case Study: University of the Arts London

Creative Business Accelerator

UAL's [Creative Business Accelerator](#) is a development programme designed to support the needs of graduates who have an active business that is ready to grow. The programme offers workshops and tailored support from industry professionals, mentoring, peer-to-peer coaching and a bursary to enable participation in the programme. You can watch a video from a participant [here](#).

Case Study: Arts University Plymouth

Creative Business Incubation Programme

Arts University Plymouth's [Workroom](#) is a new creative business incubation programme space in Plymouth, supporting graduates to develop and grow the next generation of creative business start-ups. Designed for new and emerging creative industry start-ups and creative businesses with a focus on collaboration and innovation, graduates receive a package of alumni support, talks, seminars and mentoring from industry and enterprise specialists, plus hot-desking spaces and bookable access to workshops, studios and specialist equipment within Arts University Plymouth.

Unlike accelerators, incubators are more likely to be attached to a university and provide mentorship, training and development opportunities, rather than the more business-focused model of accelerators.

Both of these models provide a supportive transition from a student idea to a full graduate start-up. SMEs provide vital mobilisation of the economy, especially in regions and localities outside of major cities.

Productivity in all industries

Creative skills are vital in all industry settings, not just the creative sector. Creativity, originality and initiative are the priority focus areas for reskilling/upskilling in most countries across the globe according to the World Economic Forum study on the [Future of Jobs](#) published in 2020. But, according to this study, that focus is not shared in the UK.

Instead, these skills are described as in high demand for businesses, but they have not been identified as key skills to foster now. This disconnect between the predicted future demand for creativity and the value the current infrastructure is affording it, plus the contrast the UK has with global priorities, presents a possible diagnosis for the skills gaps employers are reporting across most sectors.

Additionally, other skills in high demand across the globe, according to the same study, are complex problem-solving, critical analysis and innovative thinking. These skills are all integral parts of the learning provided on arts-based and creative courses, especially through co-production of curriculum or student engagement with employers and businesses. The skills taught in creative education settings and the perception employers have on the same graduates is both a barrier to employment but also to amending creative courses to better complement industry where applicable.

A recent analysis by [Mckinsey & Company](#) found that four of the top five MBA programmes in the UK offer arts-oriented curriculums. Arts organisations such as the National Theatre and RADA offer management and leadership training programmes, and companies such as Amazon, Google and Meta have commissioned theatre practitioners to improve their staff communication skills.

“I hadn't fully appreciated that the use of body and breath would be so impactful for executive presence, and in the workplace in general. From reciting Macbeth on a RADA stage to exploring human behaviours, the content of this programme was eye opening and totally fascinating.” – Karen Swinson, Clinical Lead, RLDatix



Furthermore the Royal College of Art runs a joint research and entrepreneurship lab with Imperial College Business School called Wicked Acceleration which aims to use creative methodologies to help solve complex global and business problems.

It is clear therefore that most employers across many industries regard creativity, innovation and critical thinking as valuable skills. The British Academy has presented evidence that shows that arts, humanities and social science graduates are central to the ongoing and long-term requirement that the UK develops a highly skilled and versatile labour force. The importance of these subjects and skills are integral to addressing global and local challenges, just as much as STEM subjects.

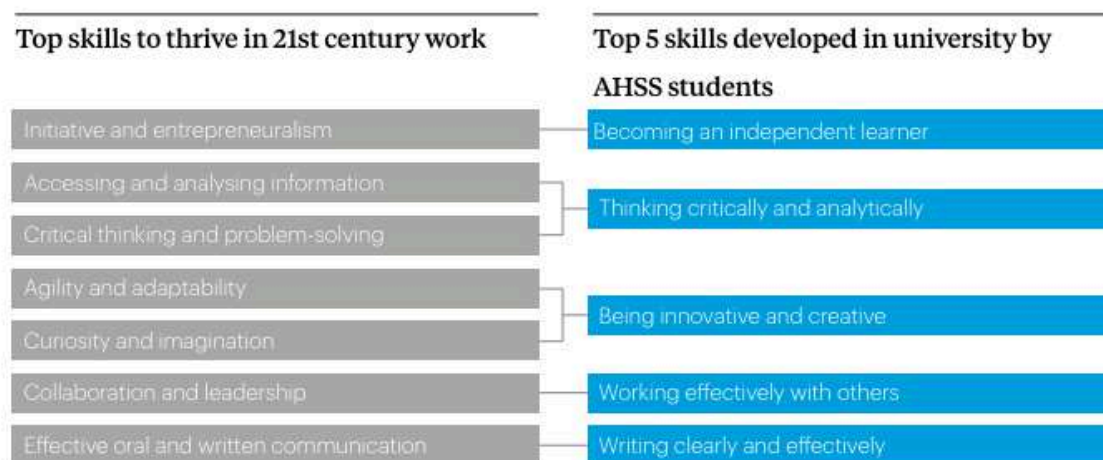


Fig. Match - Skills in demand and supply in arts, humanities and social sciences, British Academy

Skills transferability and application across disciplines, industries and job types is not as well understood or implemented in job application processes. The diagram above demonstrates the connection between the skills in demand for the current workforce, and skills taught on arts, humanities and social sciences courses.

A policy report published in 2022 by the Skills and Productivity Board identifies very similar future skills that are forecast to be in high demand.

These include the following:

- Communication skills: in particular verbal and written communication in professional settings.
- Digital and data skills: including interacting with computers, getting, processing, and analysing information, and making decisions and problem solving.



- Application of knowledge skills: including critical thinking, inductive and deductive reasoning, and information ordering.
- People skills: specifically in relationship management, including establishing relationships, and training others.
- Mental processes: in particular thinking creatively, problem sensitivity, and self reflection.

Out of these core in-demand skill areas, digital skills; specialist technical knowledge; and mental processes were found to be among the skills that are forecast to be facing a labour shortage in the future. Notable competencies within these core skill areas that were identified as in particular danger of resulting in skills gaps are creative thinking, problem-solving, visualisation and use of technical equipment and processes.

The same report also found that employers are underinvesting in developing their workforce core skills due to difficulties in measuring the return on investment compared to firm-specific training. There is also a concern amongst employers that investing in transferable skills will result in employees taking those skills elsewhere. This is why higher education is pivotal in ensuring that the skills needs of employers are exposed to students and graduates at degree-level as, currently, they are less likely to be fostered later on in employment settings.

Creative pedagogy inherently encourages environments where play, trial and error, discovery, adaptability, resilience, teamwork and self-reflection are learned. This message is not well understood inside or outside of the creative industries. Despite technical, practice-based and creative specialist education including technical skills specific to certain industries or disciplines, the nurturing of transferable skills is also core to the pedagogy.

Whilst some academics and creative departments may wish to steer students on creative courses to consider employment within the creative sector in the first instance, creative skills are clearly valued and valuable in all types of employment areas. Therefore some higher education institutions are undertaking research projects to better understand the impact creative graduates have outside the creative industries.



Case Study: Leeds Conservatoire

Employability Toolkit

As part of their careers support, Leeds Conservatoire has developed an Employability Toolkit to demonstrate exactly what transferable skills students may acquire as part of their specialist qualifications and how beneficial those skills are to potential employers.

The toolkit supports students to generate ideas, identify transferable skills and reflect on their experiences to create a personal development plan. The toolkit includes a skills matrix which lays out core activities in music and performing arts, such as playing in a band, mixing, acting, conducting, rehearsing and performing and deciphers the skills acquired and retained through these activities: listening, collaborating, adaptability, complex IT skills and data management. This highlights the breadth of possibility for creative graduates from their professional and vocational training to the wider world of work.

The full toolkit covers:

- Idea Generation
- Activity Reflection
- Transferable Skills Matrix
- Idea Refining
- StandOut Strengths Assessment
- CV Writing
- Personal Development Plan
- Further Research and Tips

Leeds Conservatoire are currently undertaking research into the type of non-creative jobs their graduates go to next to support the communication of the impact of creative skills to the wider workforce.

Case Study: University of the Arts London

Creative Graduate Destinations at UAL

UAL has been undertaking a project to find out what their graduates think their creative skills bring to their employers. Here are some examples of their feedback:

“I think what I bring to the role that’s unique to me is my perspective - how my brain works and how I process ideas. Two people on our team could look at the exact same investment opportunity and have two different conclusions, so it’s what you think of it and how you express it to the team” - UAL graduate working in finance

“You’ve got to be very creative with how you problem solve. There are so many intricacies and ways to do my job. You have to have a very open and creative mind to be able to try to find loopholes and ways to figure out how to move stuff properly... without being at UAL, I don’t think I would have the required knowledge or mindset for this.” - UAL graduate working as a systems engineer

“We need to think of new ideas to sometimes raise awareness of the drug, and to the disease, to make patients and doctors’ lives easier, and our lives easier as well. Coming up with new platforms of ways of working that make it easier for everyone requires creativity.” - UAL graduate working in a pharmaceutical lab

Graduates from our members have used their creative degrees in many diverse ways including:

- Tom Massey, founder of award-winning garden design studio 'Tom Massey Studio', [Award wins](#), including Gold at RHS Chelsea Flower Show. Arts University Bournemouth, BA (Hons) Animation, 2015.
- Chloe Davenport, Senior Continuous Improvement Analyst for a leading supplier of Air-to-Air Refuelling (AAR). Arts University Bournemouth, BA (Hons) Photography
- [Bethany Coggins](#), Trend Ambassador + Senior Designer at the LEGO Group. Arts University Bournemouth, BA (Hons) Textiles, 2018
- Noor Ishak, Community Arts Manager of an NGO in Singapore, working to rebuild family relationships for people with dementia and their care givers. Royal Central School of Speech and Drama, 2013

Value to communities and place making

Creative education contributes significant economic, social and cultural value to places, locally and regionally. These contributions manifest in cultural capital which attracts investment from many sectors, not just the creative industries. Making better places for resident communities, businesses and visitors, heavily relies on art, design and performance to inspire and expand the horizons of areas with systemic underinvestment and reach diverse audiences. To grow or regenerate a place, it needs creative approaches to change, as well as anchor institutions to convene that change. This is exactly the role that creative higher education providers can fulfil in their regions, towns and cities.

Local skills

[Local Skills Improvement Plans \(LSIPs\)](#) were launched in 2022/23 by the Department for Education as part of the actions set out in the [Skills for Jobs White Paper](#). These plans are designed to coordinate skills development strategies between local employers and education providers to create a sustainable approach to skills improvement on a regional level. The funding for these plans is awarded to further education colleges to partner with employers, organisations and higher education providers. The LSIPs are developed and implemented by a designated Employer Representative Body to place local employers at the centre of the skills development of their region. Despite these skills interventions being targeted at further education level, they provide support and advice to young people that could provide a more diverse understanding of the options available after college.



These plans are centred around improving the technical skills system. The process for designing the plans does require the use of IfATE's occupational pathways, one of which is a Creative and Design pathway. Additionally, most regional LSIPs do include actions to improve skills in the creative sector. Despite this, the pilot programme for the funding does not include many examples where creative employers have actually been funded. This policy intervention does suggest that the future will include further collaboration between further and higher education to address skills gaps. Higher education is not utilised in these plans to their full potential. Improved coherence between providers at all levels, and employers, together with local councils, will provide a joined-up approach to the specific skills needs of their region.

Local growth

Creative higher education providers can bolster many creative and innovative SMEs by facilitating local networks of investors, experts, advisors and collaborators to boost productivity in their region. This was previously achieved, prior to Brexit, through funding streams such as the European Regional Innovation Fund (ERDF) or the European Structural and Investment Fund (ESIF). In the absence of those funding opportunities, some interventions were funded by the UK Shared Prosperity Fund (UKSPF) or through successful Levelling Up Fund bids. Currently, these funding streams are not reliable or stable enough to guarantee the continued success of incubators, accelerators or other brokering activities between universities and businesses.

Equality, health and wellbeing

As noted within the introduction to this report, there has been a historic misunderstanding by policymakers of the value of creative skills to society. Studying creative subjects not only enables specific talents to grow but also develops many transferable skills which can be harnessed both for employment and wider personal benefits. For example, [research by the Cultural Learning Alliance](#) has found that there are extensive benefits to creative learning in schools, such as improving attainment in English and Maths and improving behaviour and cognitive abilities. In addition, they found it can have a significantly positive impact on equality:

- The employability of students who study arts subjects is higher and they are more likely to stay in employment
- Students from low-income families who engage in the arts at school are twice as likely to volunteer, 20% more likely to vote as young adults, and three times more likely to gain a degree
- Young offenders who take part in arts activities are 18% less likely to reoffend
- People who take part in the arts are 38% more likely to report good health



Case Study: Falmouth University

Launchpad Futures

Launchpad Futures is designed to provide specialist facilities, advice and guidance to businesses in the local region to drive economic growth and stimulate economic impact in Cornwall. This project is funded by Levelling Up and the UK Shared Prosperity Fund in partnership with Cornwall Council and the Council of the Isles of Scilly. It brings together many active local anchor organisations. This initiative demonstrates the impact that Falmouth University's teaching, research and knowledge exchange has on its region, fostering the potential of businesses and SMEs in the area that otherwise would not have the support or financial capacity to grow.

Initially, this venture was conceived as Launchpad and was primarily a business incubator for eligible individuals to grow their start ups from ideas to conception. This iteration was funded by ERDF, HEFCE, Research England and Cornwall Council. In 2023, it was relaunched in its current form, with new funding streams due to the discontinuation of EU funding. It now focuses on business partnerships, development and acceleration; it maintains the aim of generating regional economic growth, skills and opportunities for Cornwall.

Case Study: Arts University Plymouth

FabCity hubs

Arts University Plymouth is a core partner in the FabCity Plymouth project which enables individuals, FabLabs, city officials, charities and education providers collaborate and implement new urban models, through interventions in governance and policy. Together, these partner organisations agree to commit to producing nearly everything they consume by 2054 by deploying spiral economy strategies for the relocalisation of production, and the technological empowerment of citizens.

This chapter will review the evidence relating to how creative skills and careers can support equality of opportunity and create a healthy nation. Without investing in creative education and graduates, many of these opportunities are in danger of being stifled.

Equality of opportunity

Whilst this chapter will highlight evidence that shows the value of creative skills to improving equality of opportunity, the creative industries themselves have struggled to improve the diversity of their workforce. The All Party Parliamentary Group's [Creative Majority report](#) highlights what has worked to improve equity in the creative and cultural sectors, and what can be learned from other sectors to transform the creative labour forces of the future. GuildHE also recently worked with the Social Mobility Commission and creative sector representatives to develop a new [equality toolkit](#) for the creative sector which aims to help businesses reflect on their recruitment processes to ensure equality of opportunity for those from working-class backgrounds.

Part of the Creative Majority report was an [analysis of UCAS data](#) which showed that those from middle-class backgrounds dominate university applications to creative courses. This is worrying because without a diversity of students undertaking degrees, the industry will be less able to diversify its workforce. Our members, through their [Access and Participation plans](#), industry-led pedagogy and wider community outreach projects, aim to redress this balance and it is having a positive impact.

For example, our analysis of creative graduate outcomes shows that even though nationally only 7% of the least advantaged creative graduates (IMD Q1) go on to self-employment, creative graduates from specialist institutions from the least advantaged backgrounds go on to self-employment at the same rate as their more affluent peers (33%).

Furthermore, creative degrees and employment offer unique opportunities for neurodivergent individuals such as those with dyslexia, ADHD and autism to flourish. Universal Music produced a report in 2020 entitled [Creative Differences: A Handbook for Embracing Neurodiversity in the Creative Industries](#) which studied industry support for their neurodivergent workforce.

Higher education data reveals a significant concentration of students with disabilities in creative disciplines. 24% of students in specialist creative institutions declare a disability, compared to 15.7% of the student body overall. Furthermore, 14 specialist creative institutions have more than 30% of their students with a known disability.



Case Study: Falmouth University

Micro-internship Programme

The Micro-Internship programme is a subsidised internship scheme focussed on providing student talent, often from disadvantaged backgrounds to businesses to address a real project. The project is delivered within 30 hours, providing students with valuable paid (living wage) experience aligned to their studies and provides businesses with access to specialist skillsets. Delivering in excess of 100 internships each year, the scheme has received 100% positive student and employer feedback with students often working in industries and sectors that are not the creative industries. View a [student case study](#).

"I was able to take my skills as an interior design student and apply them to a completely different context in the advertising realm which provides evidence to future employers that my skills are wide ranging and that I am comfortable working in a multidisciplinary setting." Ashley Powell – BA (Hons) Interior Design



We also know from OfS access data that once on a programme, students with cognitive or learning difficulties have a higher completion rate compared to students with no known disabilities. This suggests creative courses and specialist institutions offer a valuable pathway for neurodiverse learners. We therefore believe that creative qualifications are a vital educational route for students with additional learning needs and empower the neurodiverse population to thrive which in turn increases their employability and boosting the UK economy.

Health and wellbeing

There has been a growing body of evidence to show the impact creativity can have on mental health and wellbeing. Much of this was put into practice during the pandemic with people relying on light entertainment and mindfulness activities to support them through a period of global uncertainty.

The Arts Council England [Creative Health & Wellbeing Plan 2022](#) sets out a framework for connecting arts to NHS services and encourages policymakers and the public to use creativity across prevention, treatment and acute care initiatives. There is also an [All-Party Parliamentary Group on Arts, Health and Wellbeing](#) which formed in 2014 and aims to improve awareness of the benefits that the arts can bring to health and wellbeing, and how it can help save money through preventative and complementary care. The [National Centre for Creative Health \(NCCH\)](#) was formed from the APPG activity and is a hub for research and evidence on the value of creativity in healthcare. In their latest report, published in December 2023 they argue how creative health should form an integral part of a twenty-first century health and social care system and should help to improve health inequalities. This includes evidence to suggest that:

- Creative activity can provide meaning and purpose.
- It can support people to explore, regulate and express emotion, and develop resilience and self-confidence.
- Creative activities such as dance or gardening have a range of physical health benefits.
- Some creative activities may offer all these benefits at the same time.
- Creative health encourages social connection, mitigating the effects of loneliness or isolation that we know can be so detrimental to health and wellbeing.
- Creative health is also used effectively as a targeted intervention to support people living with specific health conditions including dementia, chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD), brain injuries, chronic pain and long covid.
- Creativity and culture are central to placemaking and regeneration, improving wellbeing at a community level, building social capital and social cohesion and improving the environments in which people live, grow, work and age.



Furthermore, the PEC [Enhancing Creative Education](#) report found that 93% of 16-18-year-olds say studying a creative subject impacts positively on their mental health and wellbeing.

In higher education, we have many examples of creative students and institutions working collaboratively with charities and local groups to improve the health and wellbeing of their local areas. These include:

Case Study: Health and wellbeing collaborations

Arts University Bournemouth

This collaboration between Arts University Bournemouth and Wessex Research Hubs aimed to redesign their health buses, to enable increased engagement with minority communities. Interior Architecture and Design students worked with the team taking influences from brightly coloured street art to encourage public resonance rather than alienation.

This experience allowed students to understand the give-and-take nature of healthy professional client relationships, and gave them an impactful opportunity to shape a better future in the local community by spreading a positive message.



Case Study: Health and wellbeing collaborations

Arts University Plymouth

Working with award-winning women's rights charity Trevi in [design workshops](#) for a Plymouth-based 'Reclaim the Night' march in support of women's right to free and safe public spaces and quality of life.

Arts University Plymouth Empathetic Materials research is a [project exploring responsive, wearable, bioactive materials for sensing physical and psychological changes in the human body](#). The project seeks to bridge computation and adaptive biomaterials in a wearable device that senses levels of increased anxiety in young people and remedies the anxiety through felt connection to others.

Arts University Plymouth have collaborated with The 625, an SME focused on trauma surgery training equipment to support health, humanitarian and emergency response organisations globally, and that have an environmentally low impact and are low cost to produce. The collaboration produced [much needed PPE](#) through the pandemic.

Arts University Plymouth MA Painting student Dr Paul Clark has curated '[Once the applause faded](#)', a collaborative exhibition at Torbay Hospital's HeArts Gallery. Working alongside artist in residence at Torbay and South Devon NHS Foundation Trust Helen Snell, the exhibition delves into the interface between art and medical science. The Postgraduate Medical Centre at Derriford Hospital hosted an exhibition, [Celebrating Arts University Plymouth - Celebrating the NHS](#). The exhibition features work by MA Painting graduates and current students alongside a range of artwork from beginners, experienced professionals and acting NHS staff members.

Academics and students specialising in textile design have created a [new plant garden for natural dye](#) as part of their project 'Of the Ground'. The project is developed in collaboration with National Trust Saltram and supported by Research England's Knowledge Exchange Funding.

Case Study: Health and wellbeing projects and collaborations

Falmouth University

ATTUNE: An Arts and Mental Health interdisciplinary research consortium, the ATTUNE research collaboration seeks to explore the individual, environmental, social, economic, educational and geographical factors that have an impact on the mental health of young people, both positive and negative.

Health Determinant Research Collaboration (HDRC). Falmouth University has joined a £5m research collaboration to tackle health inequalities. As part of a partnership with the University of Exeter, Plymouth University and Cornwall Council, Falmouth University is creating the pivotal mechanism for curating, generating and embedding high quality place-based knowledge to develop evidence-led systems and services to tackle health determinants that matter most for the population of Cornwall. These include an exploration of the complex, context-dependent determinants of health through culture change, capacity building, collaboration and co-production.

Fortune is Blind Game developer and MA Indie Game Development (Online) student Elliott Dodsworth is developing an accessible AR action-adventure game, entitled Fortune is Blind, inspired by his dad's experiences with visual impairment. Fortune is Blind uses haptic feedback and 3D audio to replace traditional visual mechanics, and includes phone vibrations, gyroscopes and techniques like surround sound to represent where the player is in the virtual world. The innovative gameplay utilises both haptic and auditory feedback to convey aiming and shooting, branching choices and driving.

Hamish Thompson graduated BA Film (Hons) in 2020. He is now the Disability Advocate at the National Film and Television School, where he oversees the school's strategy to help develop D/deaf, disabled and neurodiverse talent across all courses and engages with external partners and advocacy groups working to push for a unified approach in addressing the immediate need for more creative disabled talent in the sector.

Case Study: Health and wellbeing collaborations

Royal Central School of Speech and Drama

The Royal Central School of Speech and Drama partnered with the NHS to present the week-long Student Knowledge Exchange Project Festival, celebrating student and staff learning, insights and achievements from the [Student Knowledge Exchange project](#) between Central and Imperial College Healthcare NHS Trust. The Student Knowledge Exchange project is focused on student involvement in delivering better patient experiences in the NHS and is jointly funded by Research England and the Office for Students. The project builds on collaborative work that has taken place between Central teams and the NHS for a number of years

Working with Barnet Council, Central students toured Primary and Secondary schools with workshops and a production about improving road safety. They also performed for a week at the Horniman Museum, running creative family sessions in support of the Museum's Save the Bees campaign.

Case Study: Songwriting, health and wellbeing projects

Institute of Contemporary Music Performance

Students on the Masters in Songwriting at the Institute of Contemporary Music Performance are engaged in multiple projects that speak to research into songwriting and health and wellbeing and they have seen many final projects covering topics such as Therapeutic Songwriting, and practices which pioneer new areas of songwriting. For example student Thiago Trosso researched songwriting as a [cross/family therapeutic collaborative tool](#) and Lucy Barka who researched using Songwriting for [recovery from sexual violence](#).

How can we improve our understanding of the value of creative graduates?

Throughout this report, we highlight how complex it is to track graduates of creative courses to understand the short, medium, and long-term impact of their degree. Whether this is because national surveys and data do not reflect the flexibility of working in the creative industries, or that the political rhetoric of highly skilled employment has not in the past reflected the true nature of creative work. Consequently, higher education providers often supplement national surveys with their own alumni engagement activities. However, in many smaller and specialist HEIs the resources available to do this are limited.

As part of our research for this report, we asked our member institutions how they gathered information on graduate employment outcomes. The Graduate Outcomes data was widely used to inform both senior management and course teams on the general employment outcomes. This was often supplemented by course teams using their own alumni engagement activities which fed into formal annual reporting processes. Nearly all respondents mentioned the usefulness of university or departmental LinkedIn groups to continually monitor students and how personalisation of alumni communications was important for continual engagement. However, these more informal alumni tracking activities are heavily reliant on graduates actively engaging or updating their LinkedIn profile.

Respondents also noted the continual support offered to alumni in developing future skills and networking opportunities. This included events, newsletters, training, summer schools and coaching. Many also offer short-term continued access to specialist facilities and resources and provide support for new graduates to explore and develop a business idea. Respondents thought it was important to offer continual professional development to their graduates and this continual engagement helped them better understand the longer term career trajectories of their alumni. Some members offered this continual engagement for up to five years. Alumni engagement also led in most cases to graduates being invited as guest lecturers and paid mentors for current students.

Most respondents noted the resource and staffing costs of undertaking alumni tracking and ongoing support as a barrier to reaching more graduates. In smaller HEIs it can be challenging to get the cost-benefit balance right, and some respondents noted that they have employed recent graduates as casual staff to provide additional capacity (and insight).

Careers advice and guidance

We have recognised that one of the major challenges of gaining support for creative skills is the lack of understanding by young people, teachers, parents and policymakers of the different opportunities available to utilise creative skills in future careers. In our last chapter we describe the various ways in which creative skills are valued by employers and graduates are able to successfully utilise these skills in and outside the creative industries. However, there is much more to be done in developing the public's understanding of the careers and opportunities available to creative graduates in order for there to be more take up of creative degrees.

High-quality career advice and guidance must start at an early age in order to encourage and inspire young people to explore their interests, develop skills and tackle societal inequalities. A combination of a lack of funding, support and misunderstanding of the value of creative skills in schools has meant that it is challenging to communicate to young people that investing in developing their creative talents will support them into rewarding careers. [Discover Creative Careers](#) has been funded by the government to support a better understanding of creative careers for teachers, parents and young people. Outreach and Widening Participation teams within specialist higher education providers also offer advice and guidance to schools and pupils on creative career paths.

With regards to career advice and guidance for graduates, our survey of members suggests that this is heavily invested in by HEIs. All participants provided examples of delivering both central career support and embedded support within the curriculum. This includes Professional Practice Modules, life briefs and work experience which encourages an authentic experience of work. All of these activities aim to develop an applied skill set and to support students in thinking about their next steps post-graduation.

In larger HEIs, employability departments tend to take a generic approach to career advice and guidance and provide information on employability outside the creative industry. In smaller settings careers information and guidance is predominantly focused on creative industry opportunities as most students want to work in the creative sector. That said, HEIs do highlight to their students the wider transferable skills they are gaining as trained creatives and share information about graduates who have gone on to work outside the creative sector.

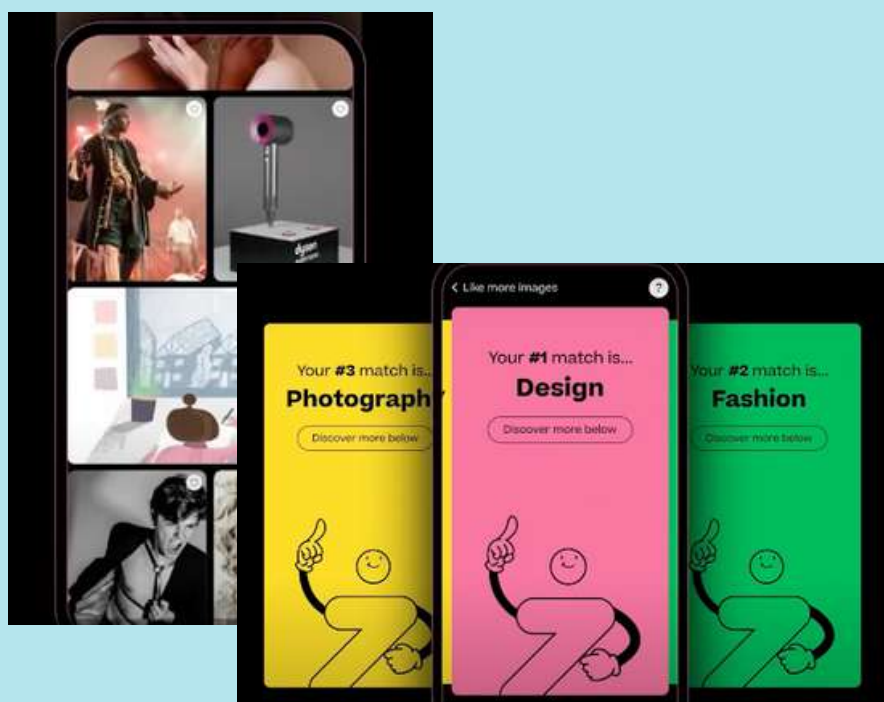


Case Study: Creative careers advice tool for schools

Arts University Bournemouth

Creative career paths are not well understood. This makes it challenging for schools to offer high-quality information about what job opportunities are available in the creative industries and the types of knowledge, skills and behaviours required. To tackle this issue, Arts University Bournemouth has worked collaboratively with Global Teacher Prize winner Andria Zafirakou and creative design agency Bond & Coyne to develop a [new app WonderWhat](#) to showcase the variety of job roles available.

Rather than a traditional search engine, it uses images for young people to click on and career opportunities are then curated based on these interests. This means that they don't have to know anything about the industry or keyword terms to search for; it is completely demystified and inspires those who use it to consider how their skills, talents and interests could be used in a creative career.



Conclusions and recommendations

Throughout this report, we have identified areas in which more action needs to be taken to realise the full value of creative higher education. The skills acquired throughout a creative degree are highly regarded and valued both in economic and personal terms, yet they do not receive the recognition they deserve. This is due to a combination of:

- A lack of understanding of the creative industries and the rich diversity of roles and occupations within them
- A lack of awareness of the skills acquired through a creative degree, especially those acquired in specialist higher education settings
- A lack of longer-term data to monitor graduate trajectories
- A lack of ways to measure the intrinsic value of degrees, and the role of creative skills for health and wellbeing
- A lack of recognition of the role of culture and creativity to placemaking and productivity

Furthermore, we are deeply concerned that a decade of policy changes within the school system has affected equality of access to creative education. This will not only affect the pipeline into the creative sectors but also damages creative expression in society more broadly.

Ultimately our collective goal must be to address these shortfalls. We therefore recommend the following actions for higher education providers, employers and policymakers:

1. Redefine success; champion creative skills as important to the whole economy, not just the creative industries
2. Develop and utilise long-term data on the career paths and life experiences of creative graduates
3. Recognise the importance of creative practice in societal health and wellbeing
4. Incentivise creative employers to work more collaboratively with education providers and recruit more diverse talent
5. Recognise the unique value of specialist institutions which enable an immersive and practice-led approach to teaching and learning, and contribute to our world-leading status in the creative economy



To achieve this we believe there are some tangible actions for higher education providers, industry and policymakers to undertake.

Higher education providers should:

1. Improve engagement with alumni at each stage of their career journey to better understand the value of our degrees and long-term career trajectory
2. Connect data collected for graduates, the data collection for HE-Business and Community Interaction Survey and other business engagement impact tracking to support the understanding of graduate outcomes and future industry skills requirements
3. Develop national graduate attributes documents to frame the pedagogical approach for students and business to understand the transferable skills developed through creative degrees
4. Equip creative graduates to effectively communicate their skills, competencies and attributes such as confidence, resilience and adaptability, which are valued by a wide range of employers
5. Ensure that careers advice and guidance supports students to understand the full potential of their career, not just as a creative practitioner within a single industry or job role
6. Continue to embed enterprise and entrepreneurship within the curriculum and provide the skills and confidence for creative graduates to work as freelancers
7. Maintain industry relevance and invest in employer engagement activities which support a better understanding of future skills challenges within the creative industries
8. Ensure that Access and Participation Plans and EDI strategies increase equality of opportunities for creative graduates
9. Continue to articulate the unique learning experience offered at a specialist creative education institutions

Business and industry should:

1. Advocate for the role higher education institutions and graduates play in the talent pipeline into industry and better report on the impact of graduates on industry growth
2. Commit to more purposeful engagement with the higher education sector in supporting creative industry skills shortages through:
 - a. Co-creation of curriculum and continued engagement in live briefs, masterclasses and sector competitions
 - b. Work with the higher education sector to capitalise on different approaches to delivering training and qualifications through CPD, the Lifelong Loan Entitlement reforms, Higher and Degree Apprenticeships and Higher Technical Qualifications
 - c. Individual sectors within the creative industry and the industry as a whole to invest in reviewing skills needs in a coordinated way both nationally and through local skills improvement plans



3. Genuinely commit to investing in improving the diversity of the industry and adopt the principles of the Social Mobility Commission Creative Industries Toolkit
4. Offer better pay and conditions for creative graduates and end unpaid internships and exploitative practices
5. Ensure businesses engage with specialist institutions and think strategically about who can best support industry-specific skills
6. Effectively articulate the value of creative skills in non-creative industries to their productivity, growth and innovation activities and invest in recruiting more creative graduates

Government and regulators should show a deep and wide commitment to championing the value of creative graduates across all parts of government and education regulation through:

1. Acknowledging the value of creative education to productivity and GDP growth in public addresses and policy decisions
2. Championing creative skills as a vital competence for all in education and training and embedding the ideology of STEAM, rather than just STEM, in national skills policy initiatives
3. Reviewing the government approach to measuring the value of graduates and redefining 'highly skilled' to better reflect creative industry careers. This includes:
 - a. A review of ONS SOC and SIC codes and their use in national skills policy.
 - b. Investing in the capacity of the Unit for Future Skills, DCMS and DfE to better understand the value of creative qualifications and the creative labour market
 - c. Recognising that pay is not a marker of the importance of the skill to the industry in all cases
 - d. Acknowledging the value of graduate outcomes are not only based on private economic benefits, and commit to measuring the intrinsic value of a well-educated, and culturally rich society
4. Consider how current skills policies and funding methodologies hinder the development of creative skills. For example:
 - a. The apprenticeship levy does not serve the creative industry well
 - b. Ensure there is a more flexible approach to occupational standards development within IfATE which reflects the realities of different industries
5. Implement the asks in our [Creative Education Manifesto](#) including ensuring school-age children have access to high-quality and meaningful creative education and that everyone in society has the skills to utilise creativity for their mental and physical health, and to not inadvertently cut off the talent pipeline for disadvantaged communities
6. For the OfS to review its regulatory approach to ensure that creative disciplines are not unduly penalised for the inflexible definition of "highly skilled" and resist calls to regulate quality based on imprecise/unreliable salary information



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7. Refresh the HE Graduate Outcomes Survey to enable the flexibility required to effectively measure creative graduate outcomes such as through:
 - a. Considering how the miscoding of graduate jobs can be best mitigated
 - b. Reflecting how self-employment, freelancing or entrepreneurship affects salary information
 8. Recognise the value of having distinctive and diverse higher education institutions in this country and ensure specialist creative providers have a sustainable funding model
 - a. Ensure that regulatory tools do not directly or indirectly penalise providers with specialisms or have appropriate mitigations in place
 - b. Protect the World Leading Providers funding stream and Performing Arts Fund to protect student choice and community access to specialist facilities across different regions of the country and galvanise our global impact in the creative industries
 - c. Recognise that whilst specialist creative providers may be more expensive to operate, their presence is envied throughout the rest of the world in providing industry-leading, immersive and academically excellent learning experiences



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