

INTRODUCTION

The All-Party Parliamentary Group (APPG) for Creative Diversity was set up in 2019 to identify and tackle obstacles to equity, diversity and inclusion (EDI) in the UK's creative sector. An extensive body of research has demonstrated the labour inequalities across the creative economy. The focus of the APPG's work is based on 'What Works', identifying positive interventions and practices that can be scaled up for actual change.

The first output, *Creative Majority* (Wreyford et al., 2021), addressed 'What Works' to foster EDI within the creative economy. Its focus was on identifying employment practices in the creative and cultural sectors that ensure equitable access, retention and progression. The report championed employment practices designed to ensure people from all backgrounds can develop flourishing creative careers. This follow-on report, *Making the Creative Majority*, is the second phase of the APPG's efforts to understand tangible interventions that support and encourage diversity across the creative workforce.

This second phase focuses on access routes into the creative and cultural sectors for the post-16 age group. It has a specific focus on post-secondary creative education. The need to explore creative education was identified in phase one of the APPG's work as a crucial element in influencing equality of opportunity and progression routes into the creative and cultural workforce.

At present, well-intentioned efforts to widen participation and create pathways into creative education, particularly higher education, are currently not resulting in a more diverse workforce (Brook et al., 2020; Brook et al., 2020a Carey et al., 2021). There is an urgent need to consider the relationship between creative education and access to creative and cultural work.

Creative education is an important area of concern for policymakers, creative practitioners and the public. A recently published government response to the higher education reform consultation (Department for Education, 2023) indicates concern

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about value for money on certain education courses and the relationship between labour market outcomes including long-term earnings vis-à-vis subject area. In turn, public and creative practitioner voices are concerned about the decline in support for, and access to, creative subjects both within local communities and the state education system (Ashton and Ashton, 2022; Bath et al., 2020).

Conversely, wider research indicates the multiple forms of value that students undertaking creative HE courses receive and provide, particularly in relation to the cultural and social contributions these students make to their local communities (Comunian et al., 2023). The heightened focus on employability and economic rewards can ignore the value of these broader social contributions. It can also create tension between policymakers and HE providers on what and who HE is for.

In this context, the APPG's research project contributes to a better understanding of the role of HE in facilitating the pathway to creative work. Understanding the role of HE as part of a wider creative and cultural ecosystem (de Bernard et al., 2022 and 2023) enhances our knowledge of how inequalities cannot be considered from one single element; they are the result of multiple systems of exclusion. Examining who has access to creative HE impacts who enters the creative sector and how they contribute to the creative economy.

Creative education takes many forms, from shorter, intensive specialist skills and technical training to university degrees. The ecosystem is complex. There is a huge range of providers, as well as types of educational practice. Specific creative sectors have distinctive relationships with both the education system and with qualifications and credentials. Creative and cultural practitioners commonly work within HE and FE to supplement their income (Comunian et al., 2022). There are multiple routes into creative careers, some of which have no interaction with formal educational courses or qualifications and some that come from completely different degree disciplines.



CREATIVE EDUCATION: DEFINITIONS

We distinguish between general creative education, which includes multiple forms of formal and informal learning, and creative higher education.

- Creative education a broad concept referring to a range of different models of learning, both formal and informal.
- Creative higher education (creative HE) Following terminology adopted by Comunian et al. (2022), we define creative HE as HE courses that provide specialised knowledge and degrees that can be considered a pipeline for the creative and cultural industries (CCIs) and training grounds for the future creative and cultural workforce.

A full list of these courses can be found in Appendix 1.1, with the full list of the relevant course codes in Appendix 3.1 of our paper, Creative higher education: graduate data and diversity measures.

This report notes the importance of other degrees and subjects in contributing to the creative economy. It is not arguing that the skills related to creative work can only be developed through creative degree subjects. Rather, the focus allows for a close-up discussion of how creative education and training (in subjects such as music, fine art, graphic design or games development) are important for getting into the creative economy. This focus enabled the research project to develop targeted recommendations for 'What Works' to support EDI for creative HE.

EDI is a central issue within this complex ecosystem. Just as the previous report, *Creative Majority* addressed a crisis of diversity in creative employment, this research project details similarly urgent issues in creative education. It presents, in some cases for the first time, a detailed analysis of the most recent statistics in creative HE. The results lay bare the worrying status of diversity in creative HE. In response to this, the report then considers the evidence for 'What Works' to counter the inequalities revealed in these creative HE statistics.

This, in many ways, set the APPG's research team with a broader task than *Creative Majority*. As a result, the APPG's research and industry partnerships have also expanded. The partnership between the APPG for Creative Diversity, King's College London and The University of Manchester has added staff and support from University of Arts London as well as continuing to work with the Arts and Humanities Research Council's Creative Industries Policy and Evidence Centre. YouTube and the Paul Hamlyn Foundation also provided support for this iteration of the APPG's work.

The larger research team, and the expanded scope of inquiry, has resulted in a different format for this research phase. The core research question, "What Works" to support diversity and inclusion in creative education and the talent pipeline, with a focus on the 16+ age category?' is answered through five working papers that reflect distinctive, but interrelated, research themes that emerged as key in phase 2 of the APPG's work. The insights from each paper are distilled into a final summary policy recommendations paper.

The policy paper brings together the targeted recommendations from each research theme. These recommendations have emerged through our multi-disciplinary approach. There are specific recommendations for higher education institutions (HEIs), for creative and cultural industry organisations, and for government. There are also interconnections between each area. It is clear that addressing inequalities, and supporting EDI, in creative HE requires a coordinated, multi-agency approach.

MAKING THE CREATIVE MAJORITY: OVERVIEW OF THE FIVE WORKING PAPERS

The first two papers, *Creative higher education: insights* from UCAS and Census 2021 and Creative higher education: Graduate data and diversity measures focus on statistics about creative HE degree courses in the UK. Research focused on mapping the characteristics of Britain's creative workforce (see for example Oakley et al., 2017; Carey et al., 2021 and 2023; Brook et al., 2022) has already demonstrated degree-level

education as a prevailing attribute for a significant majority of creative and cultural workers. The two HE data papers present a comprehensive picture of the levels of diversity in creative subjects in British HE.

In the first of these quantitative papers, we present analysis of Census 2021 data on creative workers' levels of education alongside Universities and Colleges Admissions Service (UCAS) data to understand the most recent (2022) entry cycle into creative higher education. The Census 2021 data reveals that more than 70 per cent of workers in most creative occupations have a degree. These proportions are higher in specific occupations, places and age groups. For example, 92 per cent of younger (aged 25–34) media professionals working in London have a degree, a huge driver of inequality for those trying to break into the media industry in the capital city.

The report demonstrates that the creative workforce is dominated by people who have degrees. Put simply, a degree will not guarantee an individual a job in the creative industries; but an individual is unlikely to get a creative industries job without a degree. This insight has significant implications for thinking about supporting diversity in the creative economy. It shapes the subsequent use of Higher Education Statistics Agency (HESA) to understand the diversity of creative degrees and employment outcomes.

UCAS data for the 2022 cycle reveals important inequalities with regards entry onto creative higher education courses. It shows how for creative courses the 2022 cycle was dominated by women. This is in sharp contrast to women's underrepresentation in key creative jobs.

It indicates underrepresentation of those from minority ethnic backgrounds. Type of university, whether Russell Group or Post-92 institution, is important in the ethnic mix of creative courses. Russell Group creative courses have smaller proportions of applications, offers, and acceptances to Black students compared with Post-92, and non-Russell Group pre-1992 institutions.

The class crisis is clear from the UCAS data. Managerial and professional- middle-class- origin individuals make up over half of all applications, offers, and acceptances on creative courses. Routine and manual - working-class - origin potential students have worse applications to offers and offers to acceptances ratios

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than any other social group. Again, type of institution matters, with large differences in the proportions of middle-class origin students' applications, offers, and acceptances to Russell Group Universities compared with Post-92 institutions.

The second HE data paper, *Creative higher education: Graduate data and diversity measures*, builds on the descriptive data discussed in *Creative higher education: Insights from UCAS and Census 2021. Creative higher education: Graduate data and diversity measures* offers an exploration of data from HESA and enabled a review of the diversity of the student population on creative HE degree subjects. The paper focuses on British undergraduate students in UK HEIs. The paper discusses how gender, ethnicity, disability and socio-economic characteristics impact inequalities in academic and labour market outcomes.

The results highlight that access to HE is unbalanced, with specific groups underrepresented. Inequality is then further compounded in creative students' employment outcomes.

Our analysis builds on previous work on inequalities in career outcomes of creative HE graduates (Comunian et al., 2011; Comunian et al., 2014). It articulates further how these challenging employment outcomes are experienced differently by graduates from different social groups.

The quantitative analysis is the starting point for all the subsequent papers. The two data papers frame our work on three key areas: the importance of widening participation to creative degree courses; the potential for work-integrated learning to support transitions to creative employment; and the need for reform to the apprenticeship system, as the main alternative to degree courses.

These qualitative papers bring in evidence from an extensive literature review and from the evidence given to the APPG's roundtables. They explore effective practice and urgently needed change to address inequalities or provide alternative qualifications to HE degrees.

"What Works" to support equity, diversity and inclusion in creative higher education: Widening participation considers the widening participation agenda across the UK's HE sector in relation to creative courses.

The widening participation analysis identifies three 'What Works' areas: 1) how to identify individuals who might benefit from

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widening participation initiatives and how best to reach them, 2) effective practice for outreach programmes and partnerships and 3) how to foster students' sense of belonging in HE and support their progression.

The discussion acknowledges wider barriers to widening participation, particularly in relation to creative degree subject areas that go beyond HE. These are rooted in the devaluing and reduction of creative arts-based subjects in the publicly funded state education system.

The APPG thus recognises that widening participation requires a multi-agency collaboration, one that includes input from government, secondary education and organisations across the public and private sectors. This is to ensure that all young people have the tools and opportunity to access creative HE.

The relationship between creative HE and the creative workplace is an important element of accessing real-world professional experiences. "What Works" to support equity, diversity and inclusion in creative education: Work-integrated learning and internships considers 'What Works' for getting practical experience of creative work. It analyses the evolution of work-integrated learning programmes, including internships, within creative HE degree programmes.

There has been considerable and long-standing criticism of internships within the creative and cultural sector (Allen et al., 2010; Frenette, 2013; Brook et al., 2020). This literature has considered how internships amplify inequalities within the creative and cultural workplace.

Our report draws a clear distinction between 'open-market internships' and work-integrated learning undertaken as part of an education programme. Open-market internships are directly facilitated within the labour market between the individual and employer, where neither party has access to employment protection.

Effective work-integrated learning internships as part of creative HE courses can provide positive interventions in relation to equitable access to creative work. The systematic review in this report provides a clear understanding of practice that is effective against practice that is harmful.

Internships, as a bridge between HE and alternative educational routes, offer a starting point for the analysis in the

final paper, and the most promising area that emerged from our research for diversifying routes into the creative economy. "What Works" to support equity, diversity and inclusion in creative higher education: Apprenticeships outlines how a well-designed apprenticeship system could be transformative for the creative sector.

Apprenticeships are accredited educational qualifications that are undertaken whilst in paid employment, providing a powerful alternative to both working for free and persistent informal routes into creative jobs.

Whilst there are many problematic limitations in the current approach to creative apprenticeships, and indeed apprenticeships in the UK in general, we argue that a well-conceived degree apprenticeship policy could offer a genuine possibility for both social mobility and addressing skills gaps.

The current system is not fit for purpose for the creative economy. Issues include low numbers of courses, limited choice of courses, lack of suppliers, issues of parity of esteem with degrees, and an Apprenticeship Levy, which is not suited to the realities of creative work. This contrasts with other sectors of the economy that have more established, and more successful, apprenticeship programmes, although apprenticeship policy in general is struggling to deliver a more diverse workforce even in these sectors.

RESEARCH METHODS

This second phase of the APPG for Creative Diversity research project involved a multi-method approach to data collection. This comprised a statistical analysis of official data obtained through UCAS and HESA; a systematic literature review of academic evidence linked to 'What Works' for access, inclusion and diversity within creative education; and a series of roundtable discussions with relevant stakeholders from creative HE, the creative and cultural sector, the charitable sector and policy.

As with *Creative Majority* (Wreyford et al., 2021), **case studies provided a crucial part of the evidence** considered by the APPG, as well as inspiration and insights for our policy recommendations. They run throughout the five papers, giving real-world examples to illustrate the academic research reviewed by the APPG; lived

experience of the struggles to diversify creative education; and effective practice of 'What Works' to deliver that aim.

QUANTITATIVE ANALYSIS OF RELEVANT DATA ON CREATIVE HE

Quantitative data was obtained from two UK official statistical agencies, UCAS and HESA.

The HESA data comprised two sources, HESA Student Records and the HESA Destinations of Leavers from Higher Education (DLHE) survey. We used the data from the 2015–2016 to 2016–2017 cohort of graduates, the latest before the DLHE was changed into the new Graduate Outcomes survey.

- 1 HESA's Student Records is an administrative dataset that includes information about all the students who study at a UK HEI at any given point regardless of their domicile, what, where or for how long they study. It includes information about the qualifications the students had when they started their undergraduate education as well as their demographic characteristics and academic outcomes upon graduation.
- 2 HESA's DLHE survey is a representative survey that is sent to all students six months after graduating from a UK degree programme. It includes information about graduate employment outcomes such as whether they are employed, unemployed or studying for a further degree. It also records graduate job characteristics, how they found their jobs and information about the qualification and subject of the degree that the graduates are studying for, if they are in further study.

While HESA holds demographic information on student records, its monitoring only starts from attendance/enrolments at the higher education provider. To gain detailed information on pathways into HE from different demographic groups, including information on applications, offers and acceptances, we obtained data from UCAS.

The UCAS data included HE and FE applications for the 2022 application cycle. The data provides information on place offers and acceptances to students across the UK. For each year, we

have compared the results on applications between creative and other HE subjects across variables, including gender, ethnic group and socio-economic background.

Both papers include a more detailed explanation of the specific analysis applied within each corresponding data set. These findings contribute to our evidence-based recommendations. They merge the quantitative analysis of participation within HE and the landscape after graduation with our wider review of interventions and evidence from widening participation, work-integrated learning and apprenticeships.

SYSTEMATIC REVIEW OF THE 'WHAT WORKS' LITERATURE

A systematic literature review is a focused, structured process of searching for and reviewing relevant literature. This approach enabled the team of researchers to investigate the different research themes covered in response to the research question.

The 'What Works' approach to data collection emerged in the 1970s from medicine. It was a response to a perceived lack of reliable evidence behind commonly accepted health care interventions and proposed a systematic, rigorous review of positive outcomes that emerged from randomised control trials (see Shah and Chung, 2009). The approach has evolved beyond health care into wider disciplines including education, social care, housing and local development as applied in the series of 'What Works' networks established across the UK in 2013 (What Works Network, 2018). Despite acknowledging criticism of the approach for producing instrumental and engineered policy (Gewitz and Cribb, 2020), we have found it useful in the context of examining inequalities within the creative economy, as it enables an alternate view. For this research project, we advocate integrating our 'What Works' findings within the wider critical literature on creative and cultural work. This creates a blended approach, which acknowledges and accounts for the structural issues that contribute to inequalities within the creative economy and enables opportunities to learn from effective interventions.

APPLYING THE 'WHAT WORKS' FRAMEWORK TO CREATIVE EDUCATION

The decision to concentrate on the three key areas of widening participation, work-integrated learning within the traditional degree route, and apprenticeships emerged from the initial literature review. Members of the research team undertook a systematic review of the different areas of literature, applying the 'What Works' framing. Search terms were inputted into the Scopus database, a bibliographic European database with more than 60 million references (including from 21,500 peer–reviewed journals). The decision to conduct the search solely on Scopus and not other databases (for example, Web of Science or Google Scholar) was due to the amount of relevant material that emerged from the Scopus search.

In each paper, we include a discussion on the specific literature consulted within that focus. In terms of the approach, key search terms were entered:

Search terms in Scopus	Number of results (journal articles only)
("What Works" AND internship)	13
(internships AND employment)	554
(what AND works AND apprenticeships AND employment)	37
(apprenticeships AND employment)	640
(widening AND participation) AND (higher AND education)	2707

Unsurprisingly, we found more results emerged from searches that did not include the 'What Works' phrase. Due to the number of results, the search was limited to journal articles only, but we included articles within the arts and humanities as well as other disciplines, including social sciences, business, management and

accounting, psychology, medicine, health professions, nursing, economics, econometrics and finance, computer science, environmental science and engineering.

The search was limited to articles published after 1998, the rationale being that significant policy interventions into increasing access and participation within higher education took place following the Teaching and Higher Education Act introduced by the New Labour government in 1998.

Research results were then organised into separate databases by the research team, and following the process outlined by Xiao and Watson (2019), the abstracts of articles were reviewed and organised thematically. We followed a realist approach to the literature (see Harden et al., 2015 in Xiao and Watson 2019), with the purpose being to ascertain effective practice based on tangible evidence.

Like the approach undertaken for *Creative Majority* (Wreyford et al., 2021), finding examples of effective practice was challenging. Despite the scale of the literature, particularly on widening participation, many articles were based on small-scale findings with limited evidence of impact or summaries of interventions and no concrete evidence of actual impact.

A criticism of the 'What Works' approach for this research area, as discussed in our previous report, is the scarcity of evidence that fits within this framework, particularly within the creative and cultural sectors. We found this limitation in relation to creative education interventions was due to a critical absence of relevant studies conducted in this area.

As a result, our literature search draws from broader education disciplines, including medicine, law, psychology and environmental science. A key recommendation from this research project is the need for robust systems of monitoring and evaluation of targeted interventions, one that can include both macro- and micro-scale projects and reflect not only on 'What Works' but what does not.

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ROUNDTABLE DISCUSSIONS

Five roundtable discussions were organised addressing the following groups:

- Online Platforms, Digital Learning and Non-Formal Education
- Entrepreneurship, Accelerators and Mentoring
- Higher Education and Outreach Partnerships
- Further Education and Apprenticeships
- Creative Companies and Organisations

Each roundtable included evidence submissions from seven to nine individuals representing organisations, companies, HEIs, schemes or charities that provided evidence of good practice. Stakeholders representing around 50 organisations participated in the discussions (see Appendix 1.2 for a full list of organisation contributors).

Meetings were attended by members of the APPG, including government officers, the research team, and civil servants from both the Department for Culture, Media and Sport and the Department for Education. Evidence taken from the roundtable discussions was merged with research findings from the SLR with follow-up interviews of certain contributors who have been included as case study examples in the report.

CONCLUSION: THE ROLE OF HE IN FOSTERING AN INCLUSIVE FUTURE CREATIVE ECONOMY

In a recent major research study, Dent et al., (2022) articulated the need for a new conception of the creative economy. This approach advocates for understanding the creative economy as an ecosystem, rejecting the linear 'pipeline' framework that dominates much contemporary policy.

Making the Creative Majority builds on that model. It is not just a degree course, a pipeline, or a hiring policy that needs to change to produce an equitable, diverse and inclusive creative economy. The entire creative ecosystem must be rethought as one that recognises the interconnections and interdependencies of multiple creative and cultural institutions and places (Gross and Wilson, 2018; England, 2021). This is the challenge for policymakers, whether in HE or in Whitehall. It is also the opportunity.

Our data indicates that HE is still the predominant pathway for those employed in the creative economy. This is not always a linear process, with creative and cultural workers moving fluidly between education and creative work over the course of their lives and careers.

Acknowledging HE as a gatekeeper for access to the creative economy therefore provides a valuable opportunity to rethink skills development from the perspective of equity, diversity and inclusion. In *Creative Majority* (Wreyford et al., 2021), we introduced the model of the five As, starting with 'Ambition': relating to the need for EDI to be addressed by everyone, at every level. We can reflect on this model in relation to creative education and its role in the creative economy.

Our findings demonstrate a number of opportunities that can be implemented to enable more people to develop the necessary skills for a flourishing, diverse and sustainable future workplace. Our policy recommendations provide evidenced-based interventions for government, for HE providers and for businesses and organisations across the public and private sectors to ensure equitable access to the creative economy.

The reports that contribute to this project can be read separately, but we encourage stakeholders to engage with each report as our policy recommendations build on the interconnected findings that have emerged through this project. We thank all contributors, including the research teams at Kings College London, University of the Arts London and the University of Sheffield, the roundtable participants, the case study providers and the members and officers of the APPG. This project represents a collaboration across academia, policy, and the public and private sectors, serving as a model for future multi-agency networks in the production of multidisciplinary research.

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APPENDICES

Appendix 1.1: Creative HE definition
Appendix 1.2: Roundtable partners

