

# Creative higher education: INSIGHTS FROM UCAS AND CENSUS 2021

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## POLICY INSIGHTS

*Creative higher education: Insights from UCAS and Census 2021* uses data from the 2021 Census to understand levels of education in the creative economy. It then uses Universities and Colleges Admissions Service (UCAS) data to understand the most recent (2022) entry to creative higher education.

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 supporting diversity in the creative economy. It shapes our subsequent use of Higher Education Statistics Agency (HESA) data to understand the diversity of creative degrees and employment outcomes.

It also sets up our work on 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.

UCAS data for the 2022 cycle reveals important inequalities in the entry to key creative higher education courses.

- 1 Some of the analysis reinforces well-known trends in creative higher education – for example, the 2022 cycle intake was dominated by women. This is in sharp contrast to women's underrepresentation in key creative jobs.
- 2 More worryingly, there is under-representation 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, with Russell Group creative courses having smaller proportions of applications, offers and acceptances for Black students compared to Post-92 and non-Russell Group pre-1992 institutions.
- 3 The class crisis is clear. 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 students have worse applications

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

- 4 A positive observation for creative courses comes in comparison to humanities courses in general. Creative courses see smaller fractions of middle-class origin individuals applying, getting offers and being accepted compared to humanities degrees. This class crisis is thus reflective of broader issues in Britain's HE system.

This report demonstrates the need for much more detailed and bespoke data analysis for creative HE. This need is also clear from the subsequent parts of the research project. There is much to learn from the US Strategic National Arts Alumni Project (SNAAP) a detailed graduate survey of US arts and design students. A British version of this resource, supported by government and academic institutions, would be transformative for policy, research, and the creative sector's ability to understand the wider value of creative HE.

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## OVERVIEW

Education is crucial to the creative economy. The creative workforce is well educated, with significant numbers of workers educated to degree level or higher (Oakley et al., 2017; Comunian et al., 2022). The education sector is also an important source of employment in the portfolio careers of creative practitioners (de Bernard et al., 2023; Brook et al., 2020).

However, access to education is neither equal nor fair in the UK. The recent Institute for Fiscal Studies' Deaton Review painted a bleak picture of the UK's educational system (Farquharson et al., 2022). It is a system profoundly influenced by where children come from and the financial resources supporting them. A 'disadvantage gap' in GCSE awards has remained in place for the past 20 years, while the funding gap between state and independent education has doubled since 2010 (Farquharson et al., 2022).

These inequalities are particularly acute for creative subjects. The APPG's focus on creative education takes place against a backdrop of concerns over declining support for arts subjects in state schools (Art, Craft and Design in Education APPG 2023, Cairns 2022). The impact of the Covid-19 pandemic is an additional factor compounding these issues (Shao, 2023).

The Cultural Learning Alliance (CLA) has done much to publicise the crisis of arts subjects in schools. Although focused on data from England, rather than from the UK as a whole, CLA has charted the decline in numbers of art and design, music and drama teachers between 2010 and 2020. The decline in teacher numbers has an associated decline in hours taught. Design and technology (DT), a subject vital to the future of the economy, saw 48 per cent fewer teachers and 51 per cent fewer hours taught from 2010-2020.

A reduction in the number of teachers of creative subjects and hours taught means fewer students studying these subjects. By 2022, the numbers of creative GCSE entries were far lower than in 2010, with drama (-35 per cent), performing arts (-65 per cent), music (-27 per cent) and DT (-71 per cent) all seeing huge losses. Similarly, at A-level, since 2010, music (-40 per cent), performing arts (-69 per cent), drama (-41 per cent) and DT (-42 per cent) have all suffered significant declines. These trends continued in 2023 (Campaign for the Arts, 2023).

This is an extremely concerning situation. A recent report published by the Gulbenkian Foundation warned that "there is a lack of value ascribed to the arts within the state education system in England" and that "access to the arts is not equitable: we have a two-tier system, with the arts more highly valued in independent schools" (Tambling and Bacon, 2023:8). Recent academic (Ashton and Ashton, 2022) and parliamentary (Art, Craft and Design in Education APPG 2023) research has come to similar, alarming, conclusions.

Our analysis of HESA data demonstrates the inequalities in creative subjects within and after HE (see also Bull et al., 2022, on music HE). This paper looks specifically at pathways into creative HE degree subjects through an analysis of UCAS application data from 2022.

## DATA AND METHODS

### Census data

Data from Census 2021 was derived from the ONS (Office for National Statistics) 'Create a custom dataset' pages <https://www.ons.gov.uk/datasets/create>. Data on occupations, industries, age, geography and education were downloaded, and estimates are for 'all usual residents'. Graphs were produced with ggplot. This descriptive analysis of census 2021 data is the first stage in a larger project on inequalities in the creative economy.

### UCAS data

Established in 1993, UCAS provides a centralised system that manages nearly all applications to full-time undergraduate courses at higher education institutions (HEI) in the United Kingdom. The UCAS application process follows an annual timetable. Each applicant makes up to five (formerly six) applications to HEI. Following review, each application receives a conditional or unconditional offer or is rejected. The applicant may accept one unconditional offer or a conditional offer plus an insurance choice, which may be conditional or unconditional.

Since the vast majority of UK universities and higher education colleges use the UCAS service, most students planning to study for an undergraduate degree in the UK must apply through UCAS – including both home students and international students.

## DIVERSITY MEASURES AND REPORTING UCAS DATA

This report uses UCAS data on applications to study in 2022 (the year is defined as the cycle year, when the application was processed, rather than the entry year). We focus on UK-domiciled applications only.

For each year we have data on the number of applications, number of offers (as of 30 June 2022) and number of acceptances. For these we also have a breakdown of subject area, HE institution/destination, socio-economic group, ethnic group (summary level) and gender.

### Gender

Sex as declared by the applicant. Prior to 2015, applicants were asked to state their sex as part of their application. This was changed in 2015 with applicants asked to declare their gender. For the purposes of enabling a timeseries, and consistent with HESA's treatment of these values, the values used in these data refer to sex prior to 2015 and gender subsequently.

### Socio-economic group

The National Statistics Socio-Economic Classification (NS-SEC) is an occupationally based system used to classify the adult population. The applicant is asked: "If you are in full-time education, please state the occupation of the highest-earning family member of the household in which you live. If he or she is retired or unemployed, give their most recent occupation. If you are not in full-time education, please state just your own occupation." The applicant may then choose from 28,000 ONS job descriptions. These job descriptions are then mapped to eight socio-economic group codes via a lower-level set of around 380 2010 SOC Codes. The response is captured for UK-domiciled applicants only, therefore all non-UK-domiciled applicants are assigned as not applicable. Please note that, although the same eight socio-economic group codes are displayed in the socio-economic group variable available from 2004-2014, occupations are mapped via a different set of 2000 SOC Codes.

Therefore, some job descriptions are mapped to different socio-economic group values.

### Ethnic group

High-level grouping of ethnic origin as declared by the applicant: 'White', 'Black', 'Asian', 'Mixed', 'Other' or 'Unknown'.

### Course identifier

A combination of provider and course code, separated by '-'. Please note: the course code is assigned to each course by the host provider and does not necessarily relate to Joint Academic Coding System (JACS) subject codes.

### Number of applications

Application is defined as a choice to a course in higher education through the UCAS main scheme. Each applicant can make up to five choices, which was reduced from six in 2008. The number of applications does not include choices made through the following acceptance routes: clearing, extra, adjustment and RPAs (Record of Prior Acceptance).

### Number of offers as of 30 June

Offer is defined as a provider's decision to grant a place to an applicant via an application made through the UCAS main scheme (i.e., does not cover choices made through the following routes: clearing, extra, adjustment and RPAs). Offers are captured at a 30 June deadline for the purpose of consistent reporting.

### Number of acceptances

Acceptance is defined as an applicant who has been placed for entry into higher education. RPAs are included in the total. An RPA (Record of Prior Acceptance) is an application submitted to UCAS by an institution when an unconditional firm has already been offered and accepted by the applicant.

### Disclosure controls

Disclosure controls have been applied to the data to reduce the risk of disclosing personal data about identifiable individuals.

For counts, the controls include reporting each cell count to the nearest five. In particular, cell counts of 1 and 2 are reported as 0. Rows that only report 0 are omitted from the output. These controls are applied to each cell independently so this may result in instances where totals do not equal the sum of the components. For derived statistics (e.g., means), to ensure these

disclosure controls are not undone, a minor adjustment is applied, if necessary, such that the set of records contributing to each cell matches the reported cell count (to the nearest five). This involves either removing 1 or 2 records at random or adding in 1 or 2 duplicates at random. If the number of values contributing to a cell is 1, 2 or 0, then it is displayed as 'N'. Rows that only report 'N' are omitted from the output.

## INSIGHTS FROM CENSUS 2021 AND UCAS CYCLE YEAR 2022

### Creative workers' qualification levels

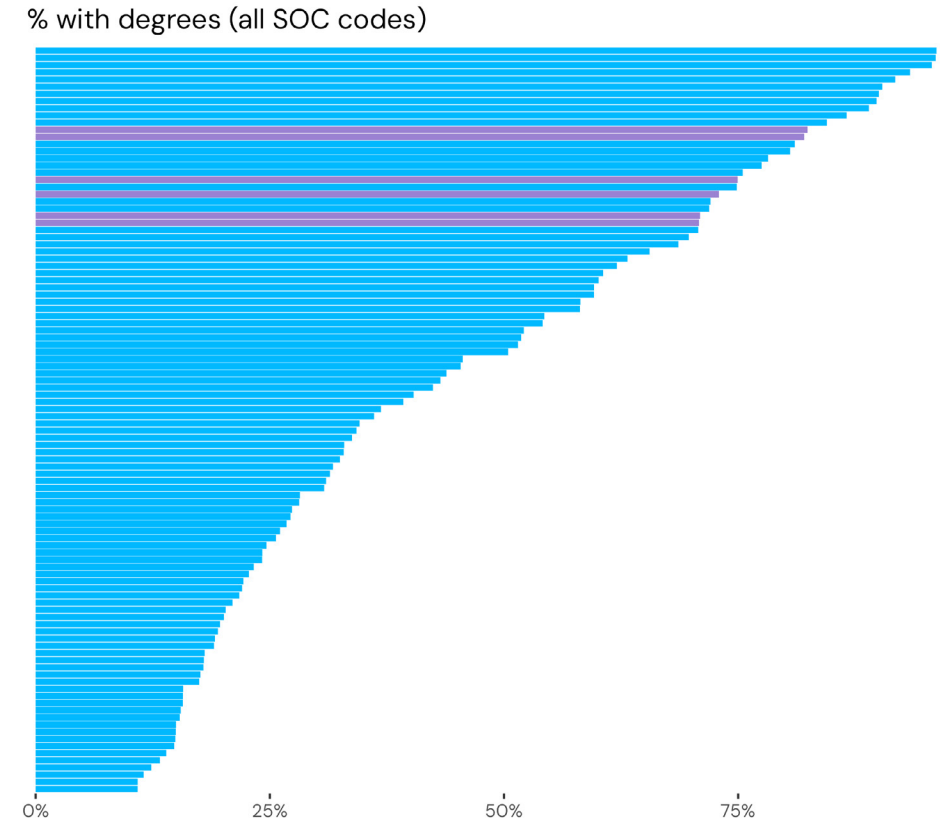
In order to understand 'What Works' to support equity, diversity, and inclusion in creative education, it is important to know more about educational routes into creative jobs. This section presents some descriptive statistics derived from the 2021 census, to give an up-to-date picture of creative workers' qualifications.

Existing research has shown the dominance of HE qualifications in the creative economy (Oakley et al. 2017). Writing in 2017, and using Office for National Statistics Labour Force Survey Data, Oakley et al. (2017) found over half of those (56 per cent) working in creative occupations had a university degree, compared with around 22 per cent of the workforce as a whole. Our analysis, using 2021 Census data, can now give an updated and more detailed picture for England and Wales. Whilst Scottish and Northern Irish Census data has yet to be published, we know from existing research that patterns in the English and Welsh creative economy are likely to be very similar in Scotland and Northern Ireland (e.g., O'Brien et al., 2016 and Oakley et al., 2017 using ONS Labour Force Survey data).

The 2021 Census has data on every occupation in the UK economy. Occupations refer to the sorts of activities or tasks people do in their jobs. Creative occupations are jobs such as author, musician, artist, designer, or director. For this analysis, we are looking at 3-digit Standard Occupational Classification (SOC) codes. These group together similar occupations, for example Artistic, literary and media occupations (341), Teaching and other educational professionals (231), or Sales assistants and retail cashiers (711).

Figure 1 visualises the proportion of workers in every occupational group in the economy, with creative occupations highlighted.

**Figure 1 Percentage of degree holders across all occupational groups (all SOC codes included)**



Medicine (96 per cent), teaching (93 per cent) and legal professionals (92 per cent) have some of the highest proportions of workers with degrees. Creative occupations are also all towards the upper parts of Figure 1. Architects and associated professions (73 per cent, SOC 245); artistic, literary and media occupations (71 per cent, SOC 341); design occupations (71 per cent, SOC 342); librarians and related professionals (82 per cent, SOC 247); media professionals (82 per cent, SOC 249); and web and multimedia design professionals (75 per cent, SOC 214) all have significantly high proportions of workers with degrees.

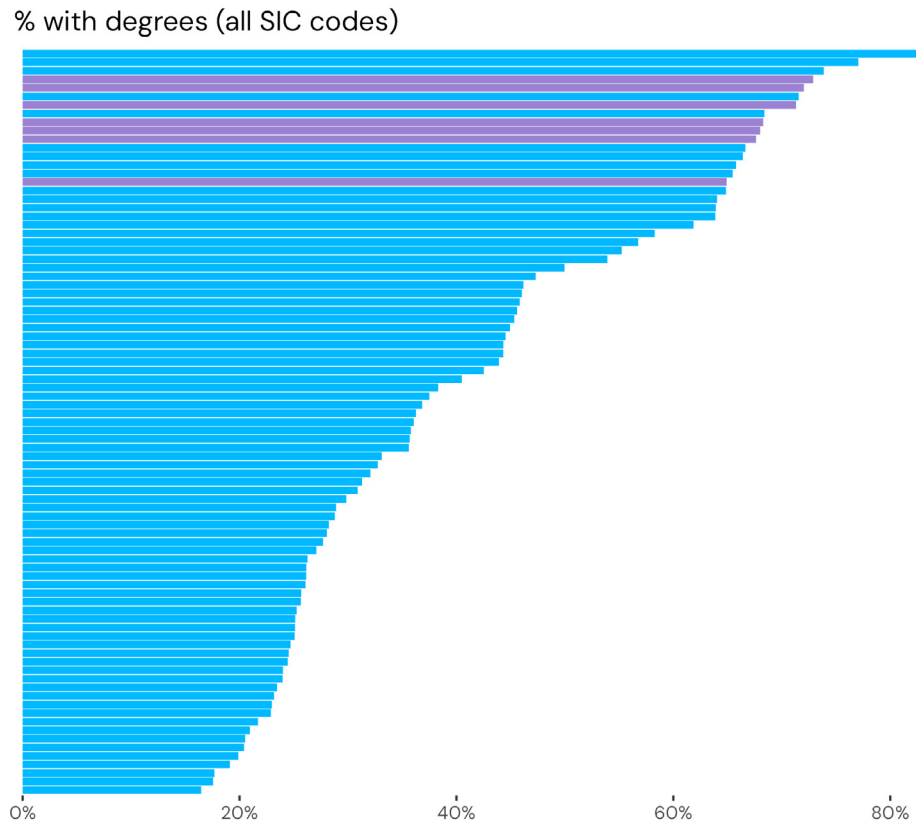
As we noted in our introductory paper, a degree is not a necessary qualification for getting work in a creative occupation;

at the same time, those with degree-level qualifications dominate creative occupations.

We see similar patterns when we look at industries, rather than occupations. Industries refer to what organisations or businesses do, such as the goods they make or the services they provide. Industries include workers who are doing specific creative occupations – for example, designers in advertising firms; they also include other staff doing “non-creative” occupations, such as accountants, lawyers and office managers who work in creative businesses.

Using Standard Industrial Classification (SIC) codes, Figure 2 displays the proportions of workers with a degree across every industrial group in the economy.

**Figure 2: Percentage of degree holders across industrial groups (all SIC codes included)**



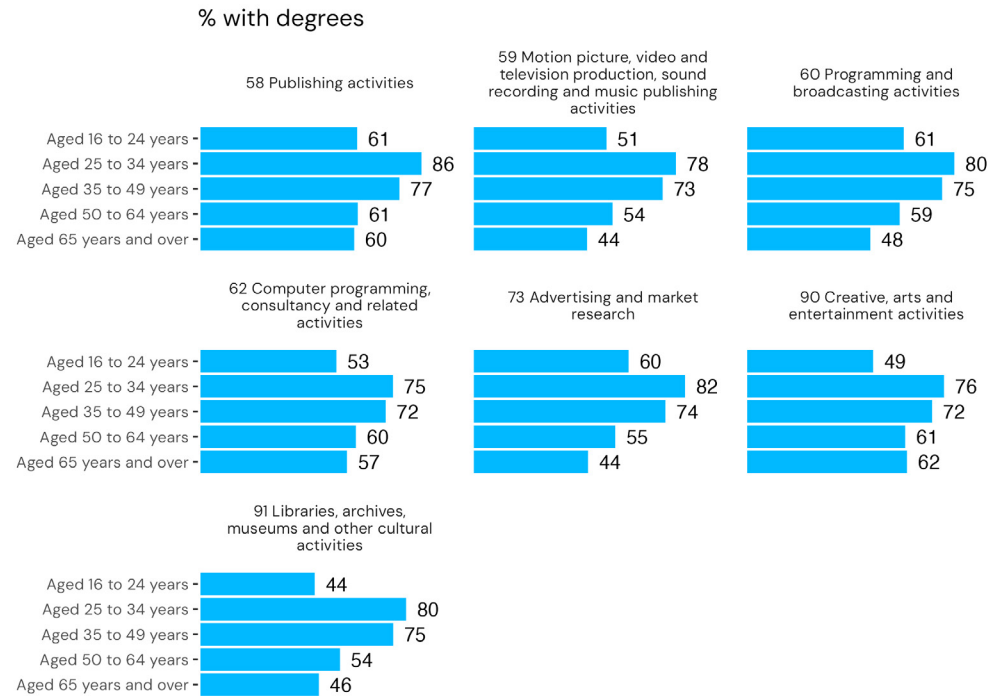
Creative industries are again towards the top of the graph. Advertising and market research (72 per cent); computer programming, consultancy and related activities (68 per cent); creative, arts and entertainment activities (68 per cent); libraries, archives, museums and other cultural activities (65 per cent); motion picture, video and television production, sound recording and music publishing activities (68 per cent); programming and broadcasting activities (71 per cent); and publishing activities (73 per cent) all have significant proportions of workers with degrees and stand out as some of the highest proportions of any industrial sector.

In the UK, increasing numbers of people are educated to degree level. The proportion is greater for younger parts of the population. In 2006 just under a quarter of 18-year-olds (24.7 per cent) entered higher education. By 2021 this proportion had grown to 38.2 per cent, falling back slightly to 37.5 per cent in 2022 (House of Commons 2023).

In the creative economy these proportions are much higher. This is despite the fact that workers in creative occupations are often younger, on average, than the rest of the workforce and than society as a whole (O’Brien et al. 2016, Oakley et al. 2017).

We see this with both creative occupations and creative industries. Figure 3 looks at age and degree-holding by creative industries.

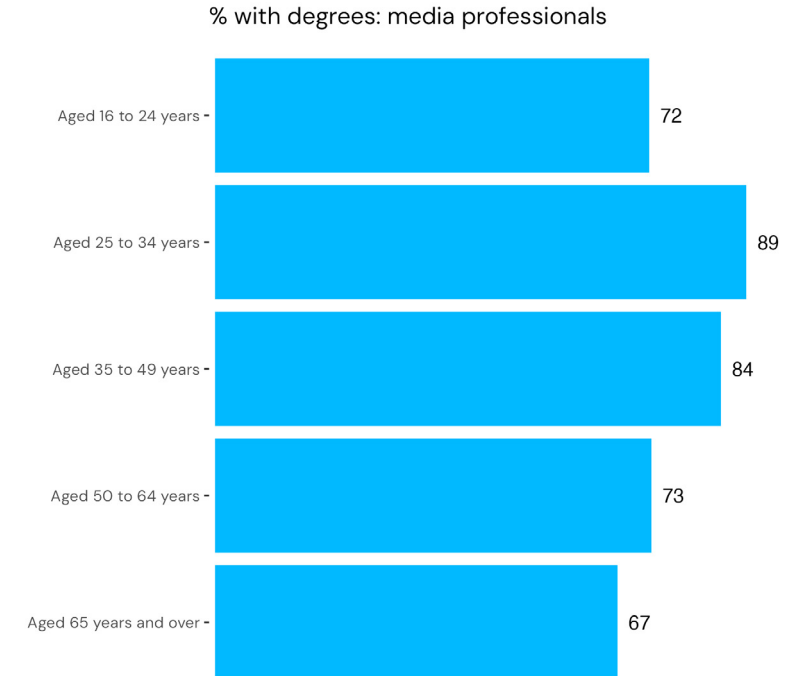
**Figure 3 Percentage of degree holders across ages groups across creative industries**



Figures 1–3 show the very high proportions of workers in creative occupations and creative industries with degrees. These proportions are high when compared to many other jobs and very high when compared with the population in general. Moreover, Figure 3 demonstrates that irrespective of the sector of the creative industries, the dominance of degree-holding, is most pronounced for those aged 25 to 34. It is also clear for those aged 25 to 64, which is the age range that contains the majority of creative workers (Oakley et al. 2017).

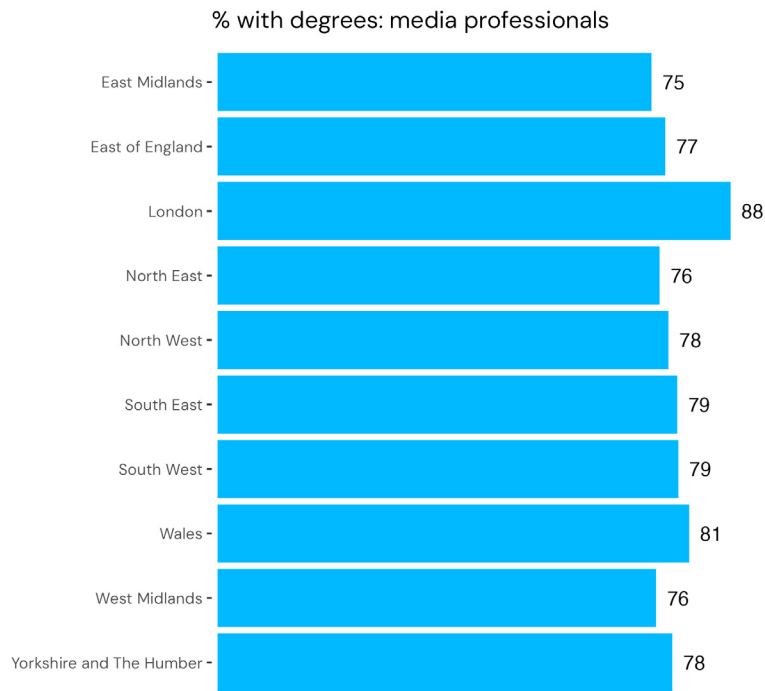
A further illustration of the dominance of degree education can be seen with a dive into a specific sector. Figure 4 looks at media professionals. This three-digit SOC code includes occupations such as newspaper editors, broadcast journalists, and PR (Public Relations) professionals and creative directors. Almost 90 per cent of media professionals aged 25–34 have degrees.

**Figure 4 Percentage of degree holders amongst media professionals**



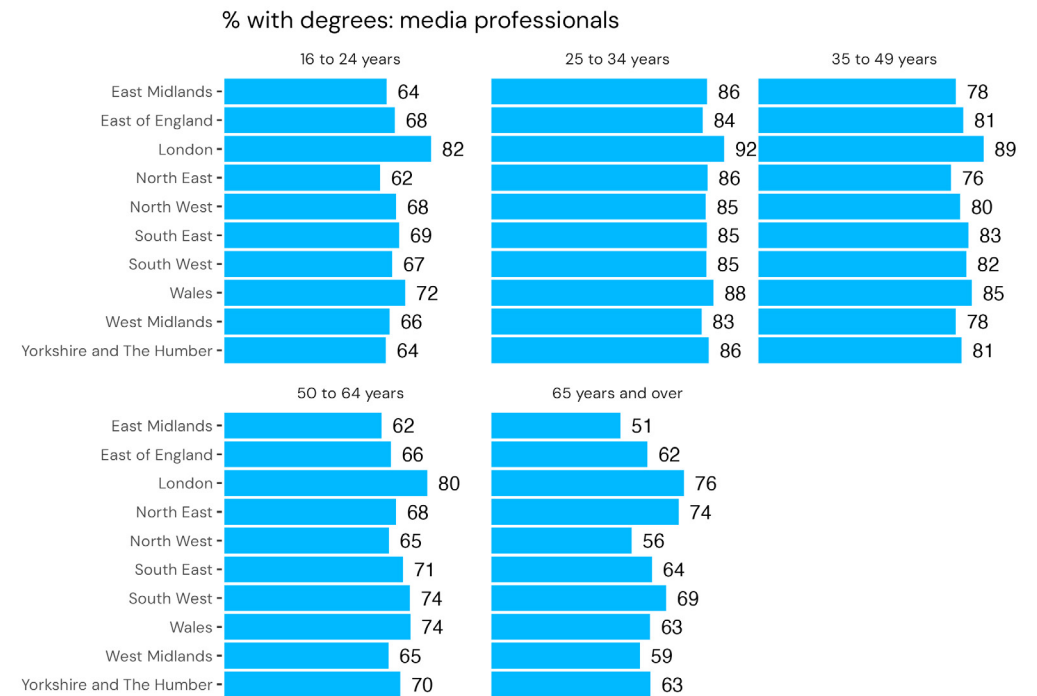
Where these jobs are in the country matters too. The high proportion of younger media professionals with degrees is echoed when we look at levels of degrees in these occupations around the country. Figure 5 shows that 88 per cent of media professionals working in London have a degree, which is higher than any other region. Again, this is an example of the dominance of degree-holding within a key section of the creative economy and confirms the role of Greater London as pool of attraction for recent creative graduates (Comunian and Faggian 2011).

**Figure 5 Percentage of degree holders amongst media professionals by region**



The higher levels of degree-holding remain the case when we look at the relationship between age and geography. Figure 6 shows age, geography and the proportion of media professionals with a degree. Over 80 per cent of workers in London in all age groups under 65 have degrees, including over 90 per cent of those aged 25–34, and almost 90 per cent of those aged 35–49. This matters because of the concentration of media industries in London; it reinforces the idea that although media professionals do not need specific qualifications (Friedman and Laurison 2019), unlike medical doctors or lawyers, for example, having a degree is an essential part of working in media professions in London.

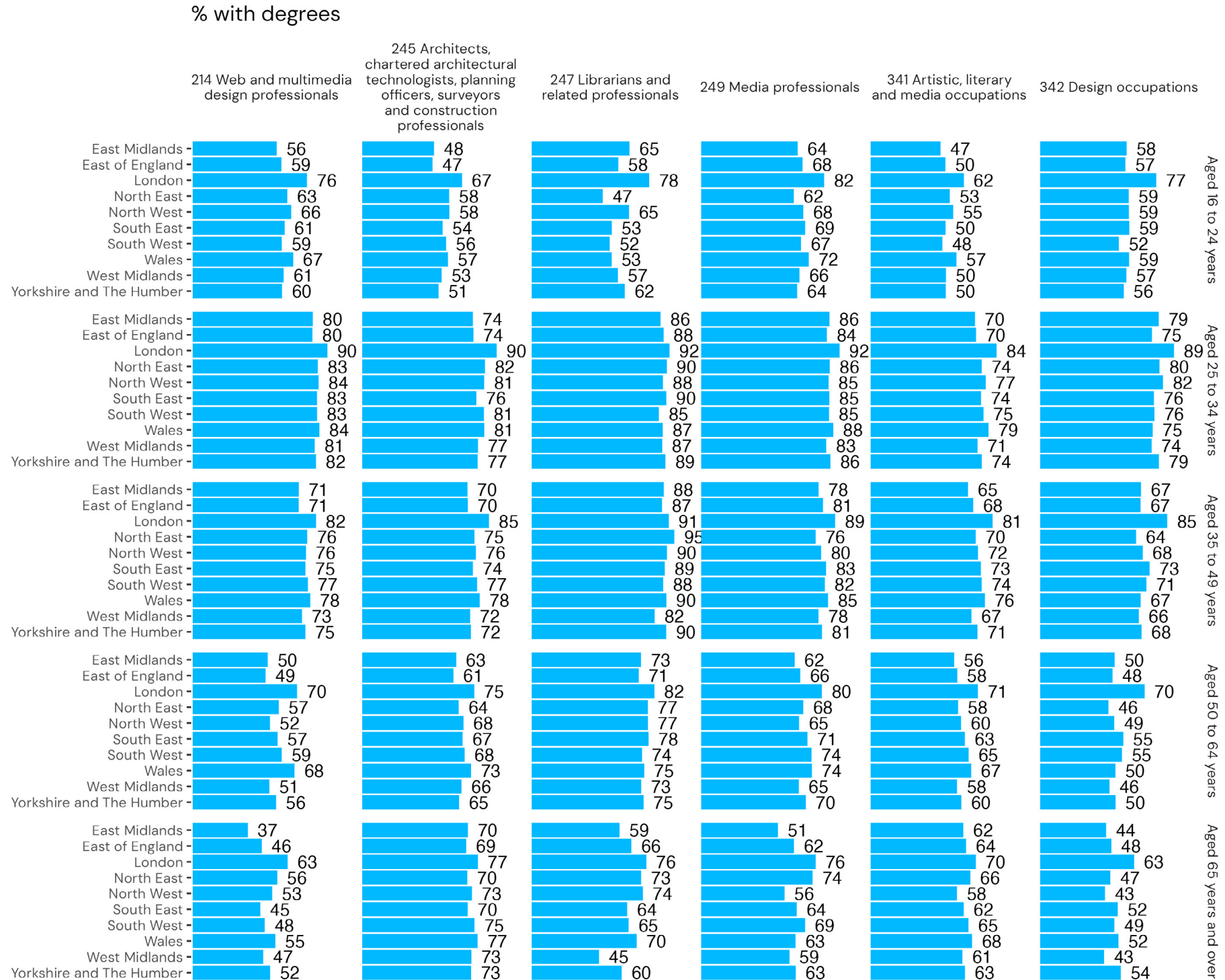
**Figure 6 Percentage of degree holders amongst media professionals by age group and region**



The importance of age and London as a location holds true across all creative occupations. Figure 7 shows each cluster of creative occupations, region and age and shows similar patterns to media professionals. There are differences in terms of specific proportions – for example, design professionals compared to artistic, literary and media occupations – but the story of the importance of degrees for younger workers in London for the creative economy is clear.



**Figure 7 Percentage of degree holders amongst key creative professional by age group and region**



The 2021 census reinforces what is well established already in the research literature: degree-level qualifications are a core element of the creative economy (Lee & Drever 2013; Marrocu & Paci 2012). Not all these creative workers will have 'creative' degrees (Oakley et al. 2017, Comunian et al. 2010). Nevertheless, access to HE is crucial as the dominant route into the creative economy. Knowing more about diversity within core subjects– such as creative HE subjects, is an important starting point for thinking about 'What Works' to support diversity.

## UCAS DATA

### Who goes into creative higher education?

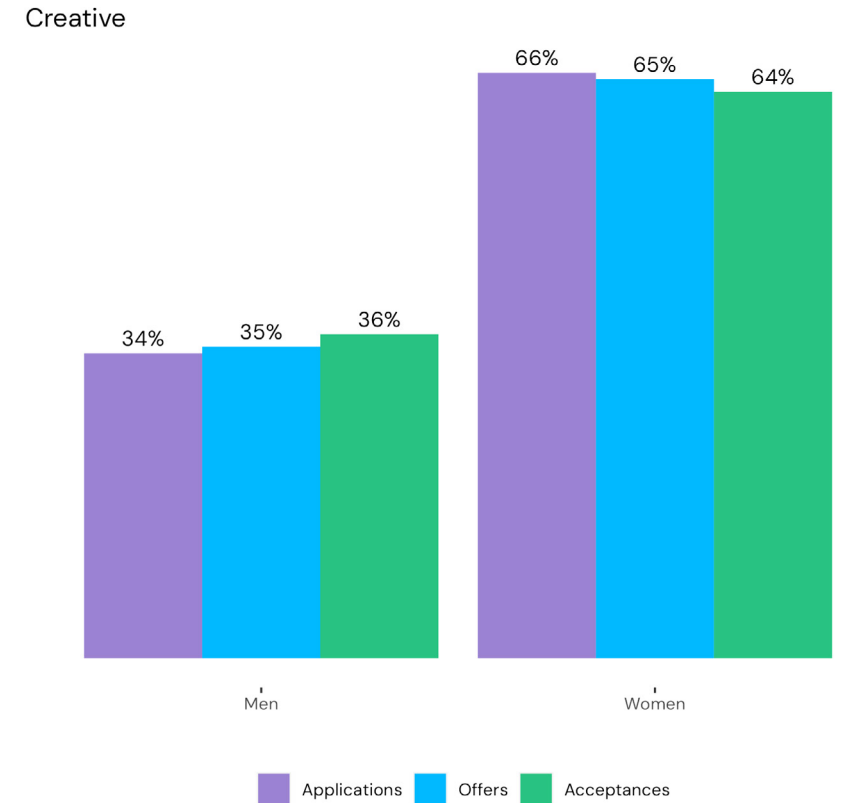
Using data from UCAS on the 2022 entry to higher education cycle, we present the demographics of applications to study creative courses; offers in response to those applications; and acceptances of those offers. We focus on gender, race and social class in creative HE, with detailed analysis of other demographic groups to come in future research.

We can also see how these demographics vary by institution type, comparing Russell Group institutions with other pre-1992 and post-92 universities. The 2022 cycle confirms well-known trends, such as many more women than men going into creative courses. It also reinforces worrying inequalities of race and gender in the creative HE intake.

### Gender

Figure 8 shows that in 2022, women outnumbered men across applications, offers and acceptances on creative courses.

**Figure 8: Applications, offers and acceptances in UCAS 2022 by gender**



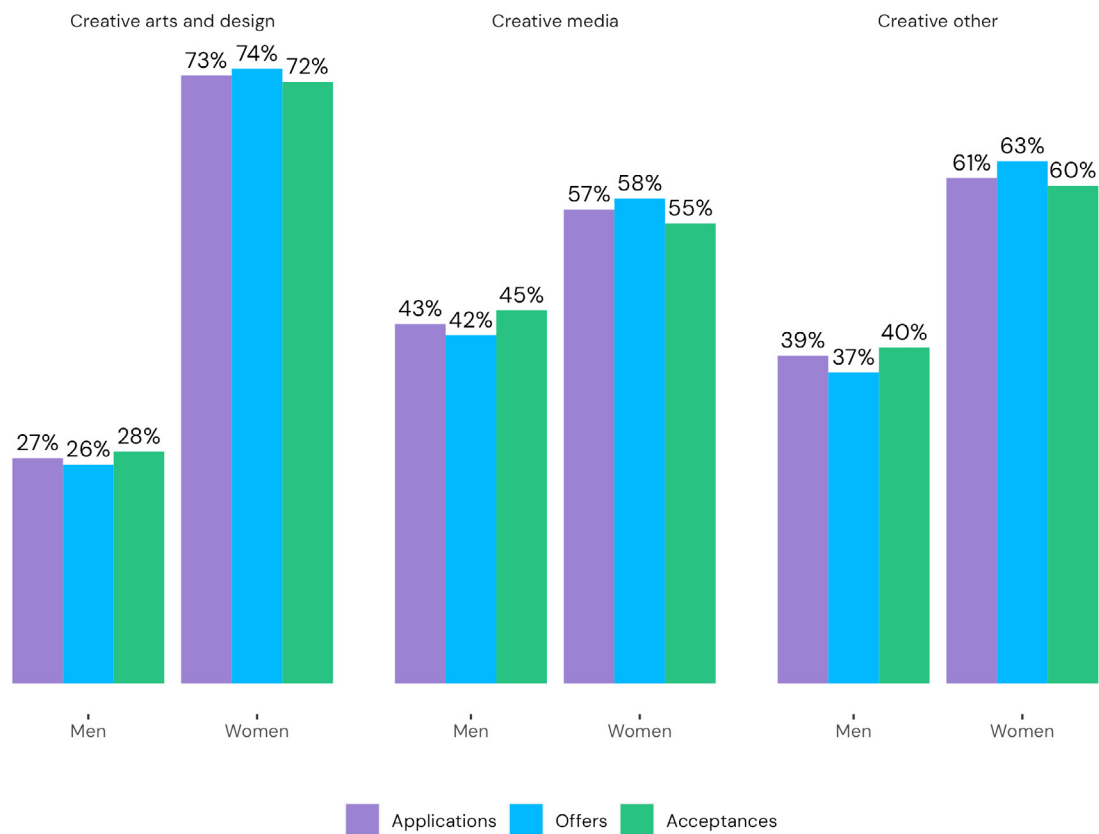
The over-representation of women is in keeping with the literature on creative HE, and it is also reflective of our analysis of HESA data in a subsequent part of the APPG's research. Creative courses have similar patterns to the humanities in general, where women make up around two-thirds of applications, offers and acceptances. This imbalance between women in creative education and women in creative work underlines that ensuring creative education is diverse and inclusive is not sufficient to solve the problems of access to creative work. The effective practices for equity, diversity and inclusion that were outlined in our first report for the APPG: *Creative Majority* (Wreyford et al. 2021) are still essential for employers to adopt.

The online Appendix 2.1 contains more details of the ratios of applications to offers and offers to acceptances, as well as on how creative courses compare to other humanities and degrees in general. Key points from the online Appendix 2.1 are that women

receive slightly fewer applications per offer on average than do men, although their ratio of offers to acceptances is higher, suggesting they have slightly more choice of which specific courses to attend. This may reflect women selecting more creative course on UCAS forms than men do. Creative courses' ratios of applications to offers, and offers to acceptances, are more in keeping with degrees in general, rather than those in the humanities.

Some of these trends are driven by differences in gender between creative courses. Getting into courses classified as 'creative arts and design', a category that includes music and drama as well as visual arts, is much more dominated by women than creative media or the creative other category (which includes courses such as architecture and games design). This is clear in Figure 9.

**Figure 9: Applications, offers and acceptances in UCAS 2022 by creative degree subsector and gender**

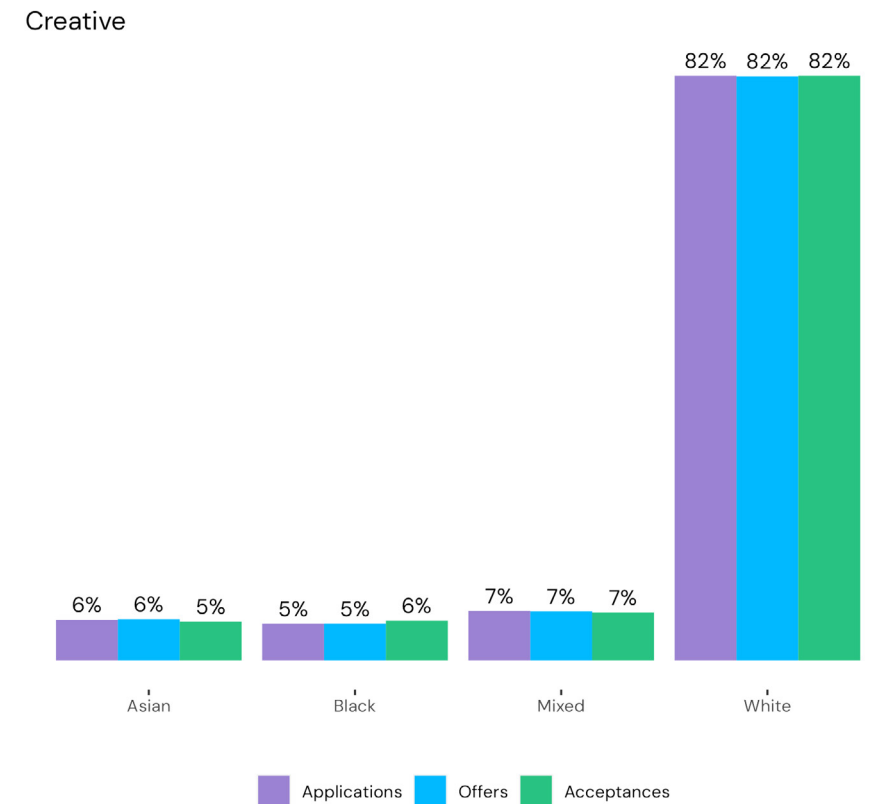


The gender differences in applications, offers and acceptances on subsectors of creative HE are especially important in the context of creative work. Although women are greater proportions of every type of creative course, this is not reflected in creative occupations or industries (Brook et al. 2020). Indeed, even in sectors of the creative economy that do reflect the gender imbalances of creative HE, for example museums and galleries, it is often men who have the most prestigious and senior roles (Brook et al. 2020).

**Ethnicity**

There were imbalances of ethnic diversity in applications, offers and acceptances onto creative courses in 2022. White individuals dominate applications, offers and acceptances (Figure 10). Note that these percentages are of those applicants classified as 'White', 'Black', 'Asian' or 'Mixed'. Those whose ethnicity is 'Other' have been removed due to disclosure procedures with the dataset and those who refused to answer have also been removed.

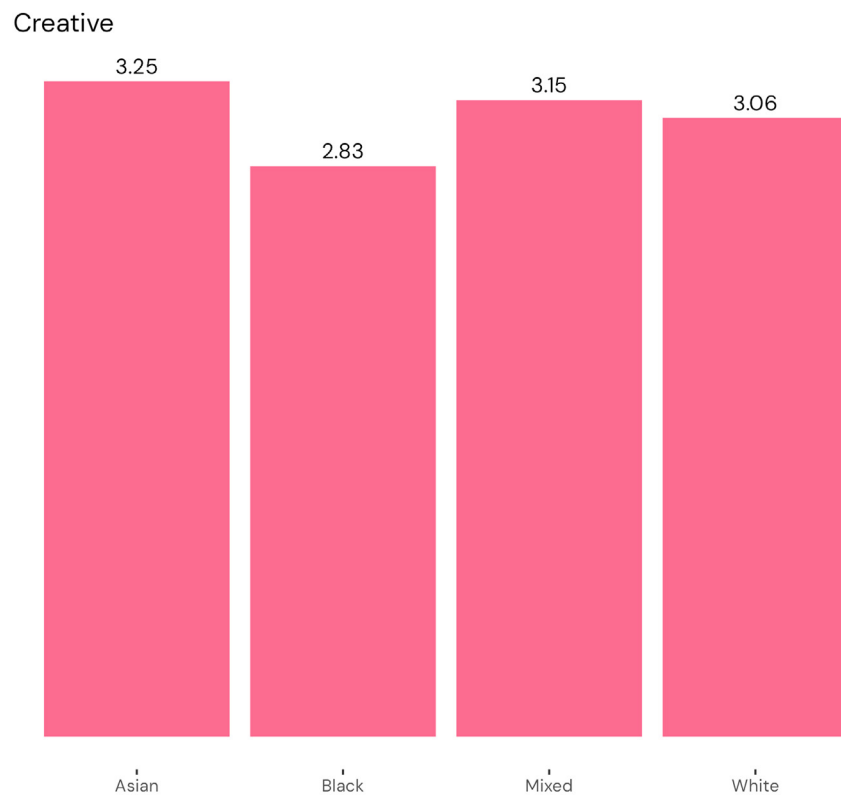
**Figure 10: Applications, offers and acceptances in UCAS 2022 by ethnicity**



As with gender, more detailed figures can be found in the online Appendix 2.1. Key points from the online data are that there is a positive story for creative HE when compared to the rest of humanities courses. Humanities courses see lower proportions of applications (3 per cent), offers (3 per cent), and acceptances (3 per cent) from Black individuals when compared with creative HE (5 per cent, 5 per cent, and 6 per cent respectively). However, creative courses are faring poorly when compared to all other non-humanities and non-creative subjects. These have a much higher proportion of applications (11 per cent), offers (9 per cent), and acceptances (11 per cent) from Black students and from Asian students (18 per cent, 17 per cent, 17 per cent respectively).

While there are not huge distinctions in the ratio between applications and offers for creative courses to different ethnic groups, offers and acceptances do see differences (Figures 11 and 12).

**Figure 11: Ratio of applications to offers for creative courses in UCAS 2022 by ethnicity**



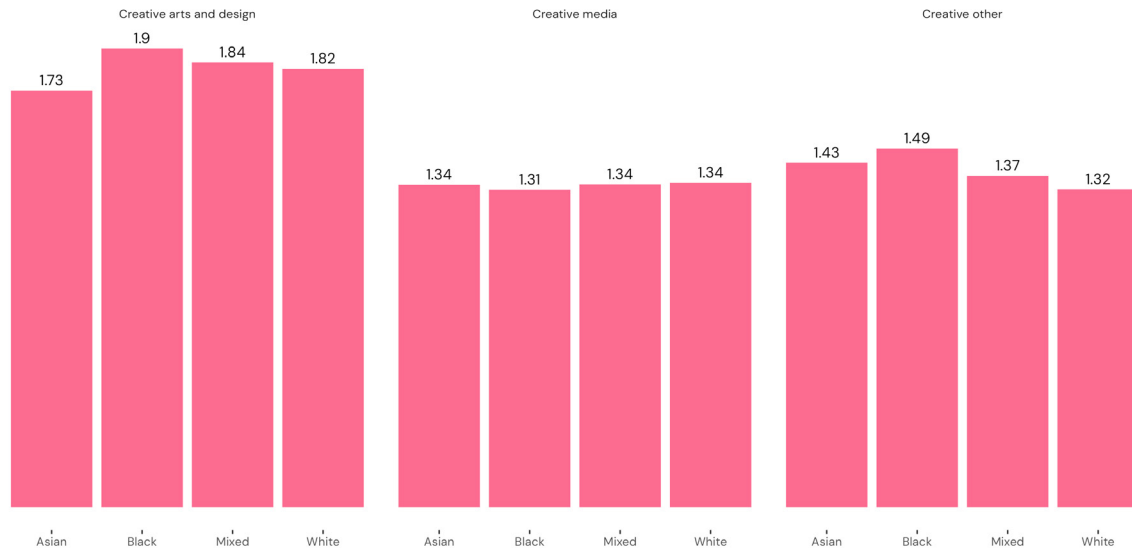
**Figure 12: Ratio of offers to acceptances for creative courses in UCAS 2022 by ethnicity**



Black students have the lowest ratio of offers to acceptances of any ethnic group, suggesting they have less choice of where to study – although this may be driven by having applied to fewer creative courses in the first place. Our future research will be assessing some of the reasons behind these ratios, which indicate racial inequalities in the recent entry cycle for creative courses. Moreover, as our report analysing HESA data shows, this has important implications for Black students’ success on creative courses.

Figure 13 shows the ratio of offers to acceptances for creative degree subsectors. Although there are distinctions in the ratios of offers to acceptances between creative arts and design, creative media, and creative other, Black students are still experiencing the lowest ratios. Thus, prospective Black students have the least choice of courses, irrespective of the creative subject subsector.

**Figure 13: Ratio of offers to acceptances in UCAS 2022 by creative degree subsector and ethnicity**

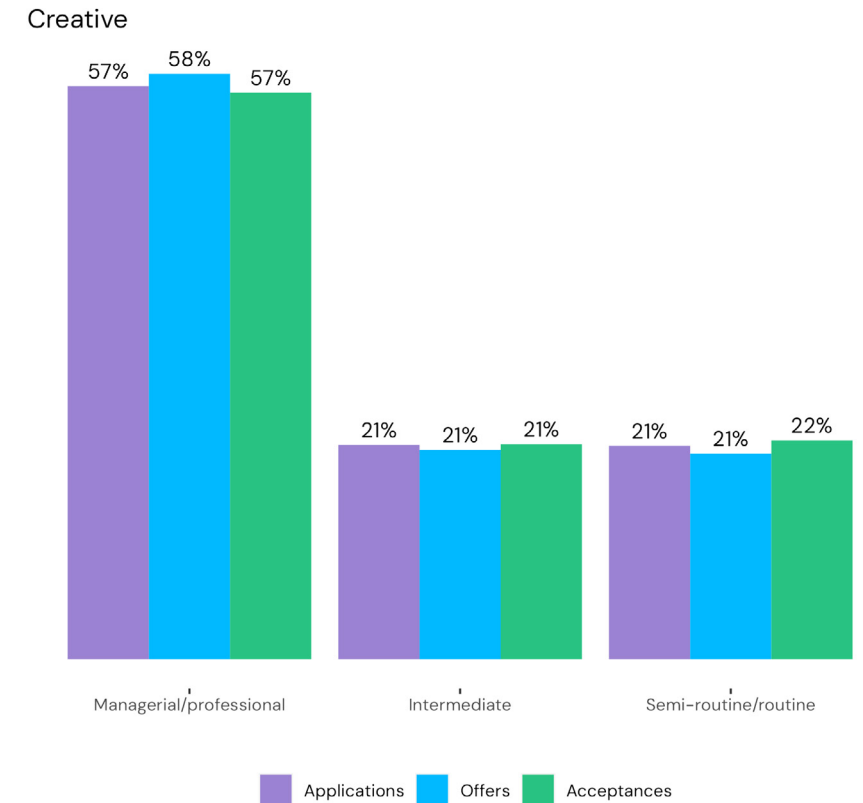


**Class**

There is further evidence of inequalities for entry to creative HE in the data on social class. Figure 14 shows that those from Managerial/Professional – middle class – backgrounds account for over half of all applications, offers and acceptances (Figure 14). Semi-Routine and Routine – working-class – background applicants are just over one fifth of all three categories.

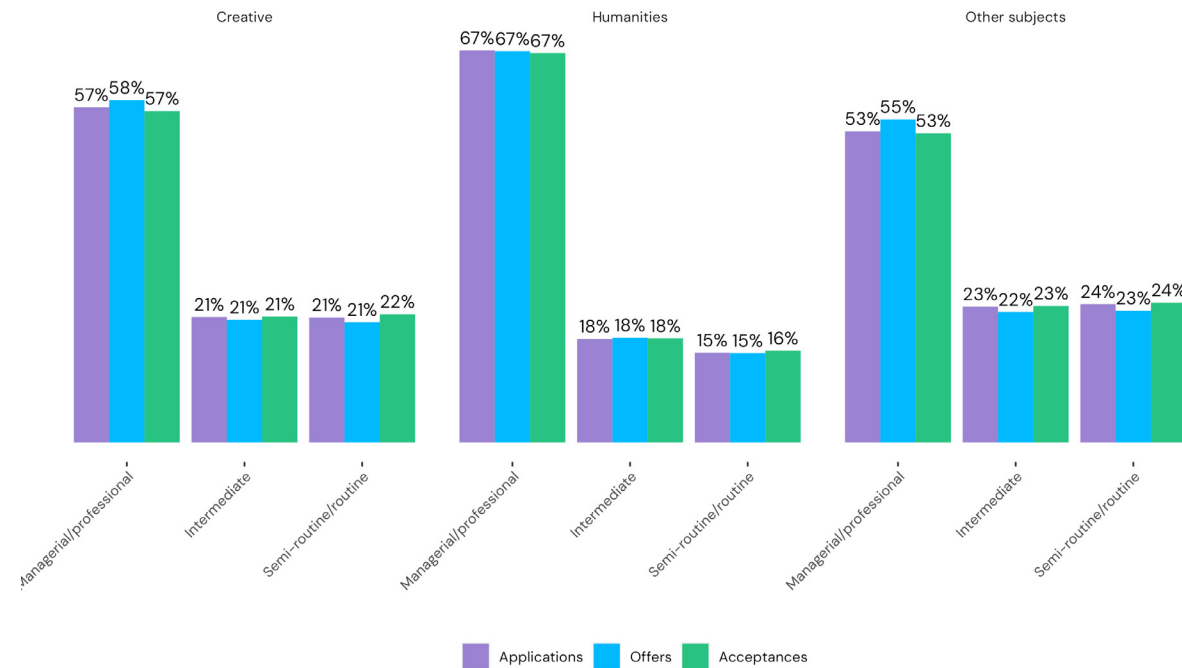
As with previous figures, those people who did not provide information on their parents’ occupation are not analysed here. The online Appendix 2.1 also has more details on subsectors of creative courses, where there are less stark differences between creative arts and design, creative media and creative other subsectors than we see for gender.

**Figure 14: Applications, offers and acceptances in UCAS 2022 by social class**



This reflects a much more general story of class inequality in the entrance to higher education. Indeed, when compared to the humanities in general as in Figure 15, creative courses have a less severe class imbalance. The proportions of Managerial/Professional – middle-class – origins are lower for creative courses than humanities in general. However, creative courses still have higher proportions of those from middle-class backgrounds applying, receiving offers, and being accepted onto courses than other subjects in general.

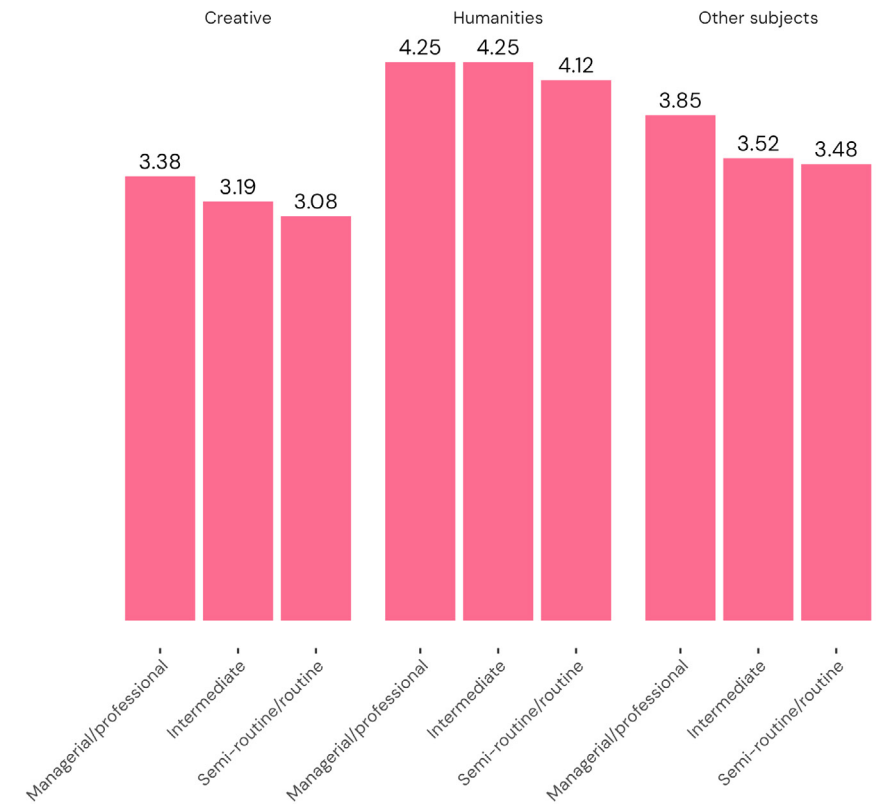
**Figure 15: Applications, offers and acceptances for creative degrees, humanities degrees and other subjects in UCAS 2022 by social class**



The ratios of applications to offers, and offers to acceptances, also tells the story of class inequalities. Those from working-class backgrounds have to make slightly more applications to get an offer for a creative course, and their offers to acceptance ratios are worse than for middle-class applicants. This suggests they have less choice of offers of courses.

More details, along with comparisons to other subjects are in the online Appendix 2.1. To conclude this section, it is worth highlighting how the ratios of offers to acceptances differ by subsectors of creative courses. Figure 16 shows the breakdown across all three subsectors. All three have a similar pattern. Individuals of working-class origin have less choice of courses, evidenced by lower ratios of offers to acceptances. The breakdown also shows a particular issue for creative arts and design, with working-class individuals facing the most constraints on their options. Future research will analyse the reasons for these differences.

**Figure 16: Ratio of offers to acceptances for creative degree subsectors in UCAS 2022 by social class**



**Type of university**

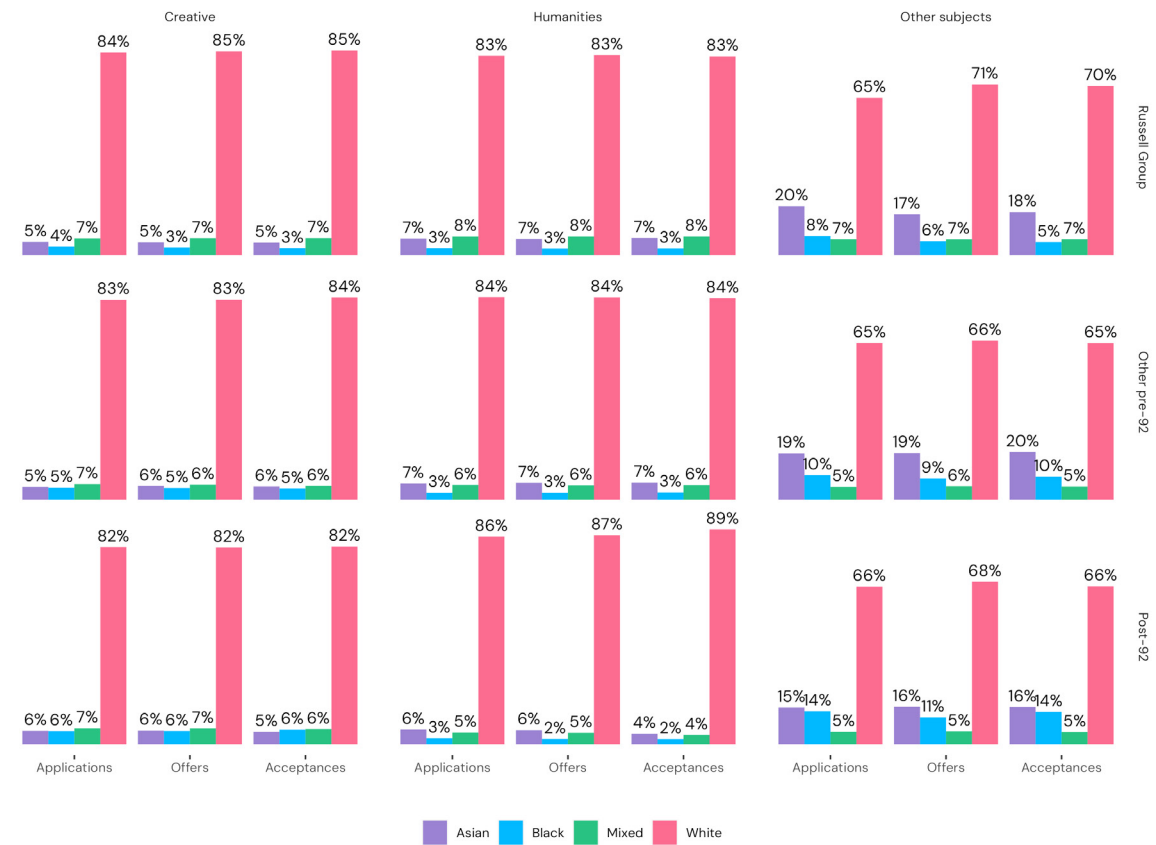
The *Creative higher education: graduate data and diversity measures* report, which contains our analysis of HESA data, shows that the type of university attended is hugely influential on career outcomes. To conclude our overview of this initial sift of 2022 UCAS data, figures 17, 18 and 19 show the breakdown of applications, offers and acceptances by type of university and gender (Figure 17), ethnicity (Figure 18) and social class (Figure 19). While we do not see major differences in terms of the proportion of women and men between the three groups of institutions, there is a concerning story emerging on ethnicity and social class.

**Figure 17: Applications, offers and acceptances for creative degrees, humanities degrees and other subjects in UCAS 2022 by gender and type of university**

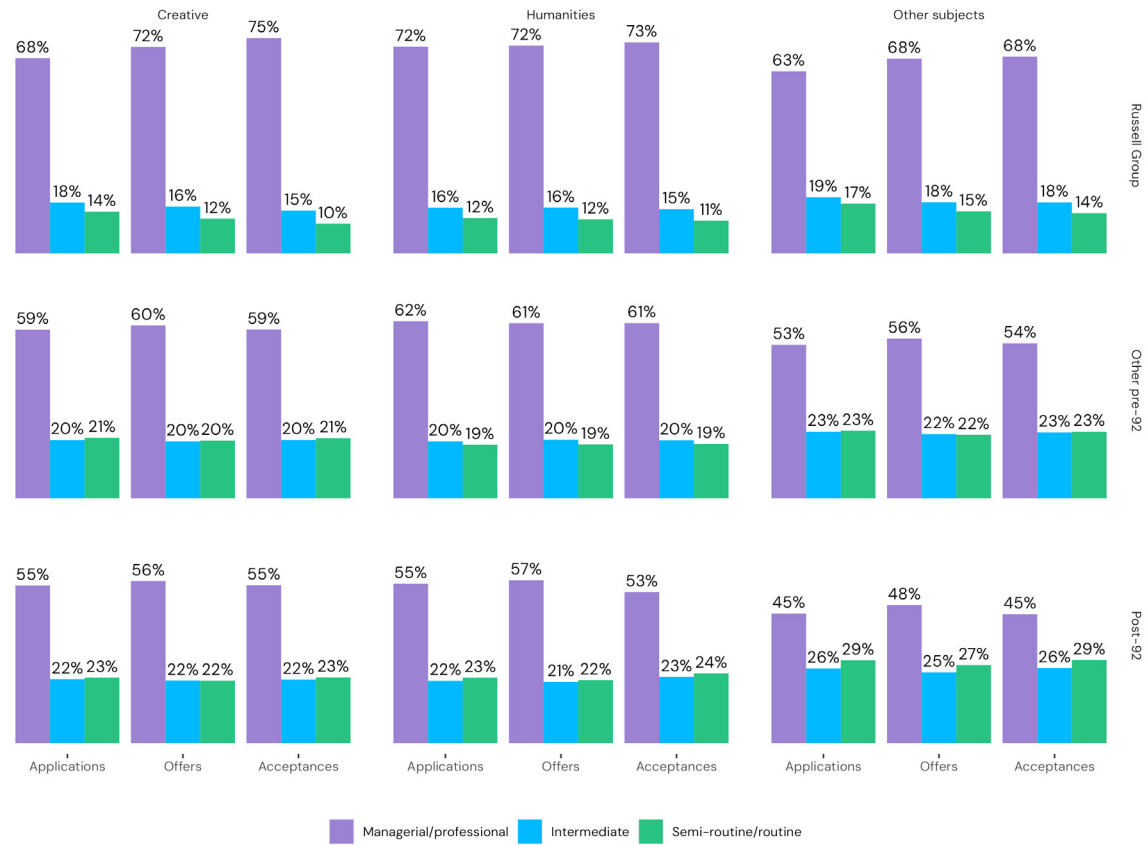


Based on these initial descriptive statistics, Russell Group institutions have very low proportions of offers and acceptances for Black students compared to other pre-92 institutions and post-92 institutions. Russell Group creative courses show similar patterns to Russell Group humanities courses in terms of the low proportions of Black students applying, receiving offers, and accepting places on courses.

**Figure 18: Applications, offers and acceptances for creative degrees, humanities degrees and other subjects in UCAS 2022 by ethnicity and type of university**



**Figure 19: Applications, offers and acceptances for creative degrees, humanities degrees and other subjects in UCAS 2022 by class and type of university**



Similarly, for social class we found clear differences between Russell Group and other types of institutions. Those from middle-class backgrounds are three quarters of all acceptances onto Russell Group creative courses. Russell Group creative courses also see a distinctive drop off between applications, offers, and acceptances for those from working class backgrounds. As our next report, analysing HESA data shows, going to a Russell Group institution is influential in career outcomes once creative students graduate. This presentation of descriptive data from UCAS on the 2022 entry suggests working-class origin individuals will be significantly underrepresented in the cohort of students who will eventually graduate from the Russell Group’s creative courses.

## CONCLUSION

Recent work from Transforming Access and Student Outcomes in Higher Education (TASO) has shown the ongoing inequalities in access to HE (Ramaiah and Robinson, 2022). These gaps have complex roots, shaped by choice of A-level subjects, prior attainment, choice of university and choice of subject. This is in addition to broader social inequalities that characterise the contemporary British education system and society.

Indeed, these more general issues of access to creative education in schools; funding for libraries, youth clubs and community arts hubs; and a more equitable allocation of resources for culture were all important issues at the APPG’s evidence roundtables.

These inequalities are important in the context of the creative economy. This report has presented descriptive statistics from both the Census 2021 and UCAS’s 2022 entry cycle. It has reinforced both the importance of higher education in the creative workforce and shown issues of inequality in entry to creative HE.

Our presentation of descriptive data from UCAS on the 2022 entry to creative HE adds to these insights. The inequalities that shaped the first *Creative Majority* (Wreyford et al., 2021) report are as much an issue of access to universities as they are an issue of access to creative work. There is thus a huge amount of work to do to transform both who gets onto creative degrees; where they go to study; and the employment opportunities that follow.

Our analysis of the Census and UCAS data sets up the rest of the *Making the Creative Majority* research. The findings indicate the need to understand more about the diversity of creative degrees and employment outcomes, as we do with our analysis of HESA data.

Our work illustrates the importance of widening participation interventions to foster access 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 topics are covered in individual reports that follow the HESA data analysis.

Finally, our initial presentation of descriptive data from Census 2021 and UCAS on the 2022 entry to university demonstrates the need for much more detailed data analysis.



Some of this will come in a subsequent academic paper, to be published in 2024. Some of it needs more formal support. There is much to learn from the USA's Strategic National Arts Alumni Project (SNAAP). A British version of this resource, supported by government and academic institutions, would be transformative for policy, research, and the creative sector's ability to understand the wider value of creative HE.

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## APPENDIX

### [Appendix 2.1: Additional figures from UCAS 2022 data](#)

