

# Creative higher education: GRADUATE DATA AND DIVERSITY MEASURES

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The *Creative higher education: Graduate data and diversity* measures report provides an overview of the diversity of the UK's creative higher education system with a specific focus on graduates from creative subject degrees. It focuses on Higher Education Statistics Agency (HESA) data for cohorts of British resident undergraduates from 2010–2017, with detailed analysis of the 2015–2017 cohorts.

The report highlights who attended creative subject courses (across demographic characteristics) and their outcomes after graduation. It considers the relationship between academic performance and employment outcomes. The report is an important baseline of how diverse our creative higher education student population is and the relationship between diversity and prospective creative employment.

These findings connect to a wide range of academic sources highlighting the problematic nature of accessing the creative job market through personal networks and recommendations. As discussed in the *Creative Majority* report (Wreyford et al., 2021), these personal networks create barriers for those who do not have access to industry-based connections. Women and Black and Asian graduates are relying more on university structures and public recruitment processes to access their first jobs in the sector. As such, this report recommends increased investment in HE–industry recruitment processes with specific targeted programmes to enable marginalised groups access to employment.

- There are inequalities of gender in creative higher education: the majority of students studying creative subjects in this dataset are women. However, when they enter the labour market, compared to men, they are less likely to have creative jobs. Even if they do end up in a creative occupation, they are more likely to be working outside of the creative industries.
- There are inequalities of ethnicity in creative higher education: Black and Asian students are less likely to study a creative subject at university than their White peers when we control for cohort, university attended, pre-university test scores and all other demographic characteristics. In terms of employment outcomes immediately post-graduation, we see that ethnically diverse graduates are less likely to be in full-time employment

and employment in general and more likely to be unemployed in the creative economy than their White peers.

- There are inequalities of socio-economic status (SES) in creative higher education: students with higher SES positions are more likely to be studying creative subjects than those with lower SES. Higher SES graduates receive better academic outcomes and are more likely to be employed.
- Data on disability suggests positive news for diversity. Disabled students are better represented in creative subject courses compared to other subjects and have better employment outcomes. This is a positive story about how creative degrees can offer more opportunities for access for disabled students and workers.
- There is a clear variation in how different diverse groups access job opportunities immediately post-graduation. The data indicates that women graduates are less likely to use university sources or a personal network to find work than men, while they are more likely to use media (advertisements) and recruitment agencies. Black and Asian graduates are more likely to use university connections alongside media advertisements or agencies (as for women graduates) and less likely to use personal networks and previous employment.

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## KEY FINDINGS

This report uses data from the Higher Education Statistics Agency (HESA) to study the diversity of the student population in creative subjects. It focuses on UK higher education institutions (HEIs), exploring the impact of gender, ethnicity, disability and socio-economic status on academic and labour market outcomes. A future academic paper will provide more detailed analysis, including a focus on different types of universities and further intersectional analysis of the data. The purpose of this report is to highlight the key findings from the initial data analysis.

### Studying creative subjects

The results show that Black and Asian students are less likely to undertake a creative subject degree at university than their White peers.

Similarly, albeit lower in size, medium and low socio-economic status (SES) students are less likely to undertake a creative subject degree than their higher SES peers when the analysis takes into account their tariff scores<sup>1</sup>.

Those with disabilities are more likely to study for creative degrees.

Women are only slightly more likely to study creative subjects, but this is driven by higher percentages of women in some specific creative disciplines.

Overall, the groups least likely to undertake a creative subject degree are male Pakistani or Bangladeshi students, those who have no disability and those who are from middle or low-SES families.

### Academic outcomes and finding a job for creative subject graduates

Employment outcomes (full-time vs. part-time employment or unemployment) for women, ethnically diverse and disabled graduates are – with minor differences – less favourable than for White, non-disabled, men.

Women graduates are more likely to choose a non-creative subject if they continue to study after their undergraduate creative degree.

### Entering the creative sector

Women, ethnic minority graduates and those from medium and low-SES backgrounds are less likely to go into creative jobs immediately after graduation.

Those creative subject students with disabilities are more likely to work in the creative economy.

Black and Asian graduates are less likely to enter the creative economy than their White peers. The only exception is if they enter a non-creative role within the creative industries.

Socio-economic differences are smaller in this category.

White men with no disabilities are a lot more likely to access creative jobs immediately following graduation than other groups.

### Working in creative jobs

Compared to men, women are more likely than men to be employed as ‘embedded’ creatives, rather than ‘specialised’ creatives. This means women are more likely to work in a job related to their creative degree in an industry outside of the creative industries, for example, a job in marketing and PR working for an organisation outside of the creative sector vs. a marketing and PR job within a marketing firm.

Medium and low-SES graduates are less likely to work as a specialist creative than high-SES students, while low-SES graduates are less likely to work as an embedded creative worker than high-SES graduates.

If they do get a job, Black and Asian students are more likely to work in the creative industries in a creative occupation than their White peers.

Those with physical and learning disabilities are more likely to work in creative industries than their non-disabled peers, but they are likely to be in non-creative roles.

<sup>1</sup> Students' tariff scores are calculated using the letter grades they obtained from pre-university exams such as A-levels. The letter grades were converted using the tariff points converter available on the Universities and Colleges Admissions Service (UCAS)'s website. These serve as controls for pre-university academic success.

## INTRODUCTION

As highlighted in the project's introductory paper, HE plays a key role in determining access to creative and cultural employment. A report by NESTA in 2003 showed the DCMS-defined creative industries in the UK are a 'highly educated' sector, with 43 per cent of employees having a tertiary degree qualification or higher (compared to an average of 16 per cent for the workforce as a whole). The data from the Census 2021 data in our *Creative higher education: Insights from UCAS and Census 2021* report confirms that this trend has accelerated in the past 20 years. Using Labour Force Survey data (Oakley et al., 2017) estimated that over half (56 per cent) of workers in creative occupations held a degree in 2017. The Census 2021 data suggests this proportion was 70 per cent in 2021.

This report further explores the connections between HE, diversity and creative work. It builds on previous research (Comunian et al., 2010 and 2021) that identified a need to critically explore and understand the career outcomes of creative graduates. It also builds on work that examines how diversity characteristics, for example, gender (Brook et al., 2022), determine graduate outcomes.

The paper responds to recent calls to look at creative HE and creative work as part of a broader creative and cultural ecosystem (de Bernard et al., 2022 and 2023). Creative HE represents one of the key structures that shape the development of sustainable creative and cultural work, as illustrated by Dent et al., (2022).

The role of HE in the creative economy has been explored from a range of perspectives from issues of access and employability (Ashton and Noonan, 2013) to career perspectives and geographical dynamics (Faggian et al., 2014). Diversity in the student population of creative HE has been the area of work that, due to the complexity of accessing robust data, has been less prominent. This report aims to contribute and instigate further critical academic and policy work on diversity in creative HE.

The report expands our intention, as initiated in *Creative Majority* (Wreyford et al., 2021), to illustrate the structural changes necessary to foster an equitable, diverse and sustainable creative economy. A wide range of evidence points to the inequalities that operate within the creative and cultural workplace. By addressing 'What Works' to support equitable access and inclusion within

creative education, we aim to further the development of an inclusive creative economy.

One relevant reference point is how creative and cultural jobs are understood for data monitoring purposes. The framework on which most official occupational classification models are based, including the DCMS Creative Industries Economic Estimates Methodology (2016), is the 'creative trident' model (NESTA, 2008). The creative trident contains three types of occupational categories for creative/cultural jobs:

- 1 'Specialist' artists, professionals or creative individuals working within the creative industries. Examples include a filmmaker working in film and television or a designer working in a design agency.
- 2 'Embedded' creative occupations i.e., those creative occupations that are based in other industrial sectors outside the creative industries. Examples include a designer working in the manufacturing sector or a PR person working in public administration.
- 3 'Support jobs' within the creative industries. These are non-creative occupations such as an accountant or retail assistant, working in creative industries such as museums or theatres.

Looking at career outcomes of graduates with creative degrees, there is an assumption that the better fit (a job that corresponds to the qualification of the creative graduate) would be in a specialised or embedded type of occupation. 'Support' jobs may not necessarily correspond with the workers' acquired qualifications but still represent an occupation within the creative economy. According to Comunian et al. (2015) specialised and embedded creative occupations provide higher salaries for creative graduates, while supportive roles are less well paid and often more unstable.

The wider *Making the Creative Majority* project considers 'What Works' to support diversity and inclusion in creative education and the talent pipeline with a focus on the 16+ age category. In this specific report, we focus on the following research questions connected to attendance rates on UK creative HE

courses and the transition from creative HE to creative/cultural jobs. The research that informs this paper has addressed the following questions:

- 1 Who studies creative subjects and how is their composition diverse with respect to diversity categories (gender, ethnicity, socio-economic class and disability) from other subject groups?
- 2 What are the educational and employment outcomes of creative graduates and how does diversity connect with these outcomes?
- 3 Focusing more on creative occupations and creative industries, how does diversity reflect on the kind of employment of different groups of creative graduates? This includes:
  - a. The type of creative work (embedded, specialist or support)
  - b. The way the job is found
  - c. The characteristics of the job
  - d. How some of these characteristics and patterns connect with the type of HE institutions attended by creative graduates

## DATASETS OVERVIEW

This report builds on two datasets from the HESA data<sup>2</sup> to understand the diversity of students accessing HE and how this might impact their employability:

### HESA Student Records

HESA's Student Records is an administrative dataset that includes information about all the students who study at a UK higher education institution at any given point regardless of their domicile, what, where or for how long they study. It includes

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<sup>2</sup> This work uses data from Higher Education Statistics Agency data sources. Copyright Higher Education Statistics Agency (HESA) Limited. Neither HESA Limited nor HESA Services Limited can accept responsibility for any inferences or conclusions derived by third parties from data or other information supplied by HESA Limited or HESA Services Limited.

information about the qualifications the students had when they started their undergraduate education as well as their demographic characteristics and academic outcomes upon graduation.

The access to these data enabled the initial reflection on longitudinal trends and the main quantitative research. This data covers all students who studied for an undergraduate degree between 2010 and 2017<sup>3</sup>. We focused on British-domiciled first-degree students with a minimum sample size of 331,085 (2012–13 cohort) and maximum sample size of 381,680 (2011–12 cohort).

### HESA's Destinations of Leavers from Higher Education (DLHE) survey

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.

DLHE surveyed undergraduate cohorts six months after graduation in January 2017 and 2018, respectively. These were the last two DLHE cohorts before the switch to the Graduate Outcomes survey (where respondents are surveyed 15 months after graduation). We focus on British-domiciled first-degree graduates who responded to the DLHE survey (excluding those who responded with an explicit refusal) with a sample size of 248,655 and 254,495 for the 2015–16 and 2016–17 cohorts, respectively. We follow HESA's rules for data presentation: all numbers are rounded to the nearest multiple of 5. Any number lower than 2.5 is rounded to 0 and halves are always rounded upwards (e.g. 2.5 is rounded to 5). Percentages are displayed to 0 decimal places. Percentages based on fewer than 22.5 individuals are suppressed. Averages based on seven or fewer individuals are suppressed.

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<sup>3</sup> We acknowledge the support provided by ESRC (grant ES/M008622/1).

## ANALYSING HESA DATA

In this report, we focus on students who studied within one of the following three creative subject areas (a full list of codes used in each category is available in Appendix 3.1):

- 1 Creative Arts and Design (CAD)
- 2 Creative Media (CM)
- 3 Creative Other (CO)

In exploring the transition from study to work, we defined creative occupations according to previous literature (Faggian et al., 2013). We also apply the NESTA (2008) creative trident framework of classifying creative roles as specialist, embedded or support jobs.

We restricted our sample to British students who were domiciled in the UK before starting their degree to avoid the possibility of selection problems (those coming from abroad might be positively selected as they would bear a higher financial and non-pecuniary cost of studying for a degree in the UK). However, in parts of our analysis such as when we analysed who studies for a degree in creative subjects or who goes into creative jobs, we took all UK British students into account. There are also additional sample restrictions for some of the variables and these are explained in the notes section of each table.

### Diversity measures and HESA data

The analysis of diversity is limited to the data and categories offered by the HESA dataset, as specified by HESA:

#### Sex/gender:

This field records the sex of the student, as opposed to the gender with which they identify. 'Other' is included for students whose sex aligns with terms such as intersex, androgyne, intergender, ambigender, gender fluid, polygender and gender queer.

### Socio-economic status:

The SES of students participating in HE is classified according to the National Statistics Socio-Economic Classification (NS-SEC), a system based on occupational class. The method of determining a student's socio-economic background depends on the age of the student at the start of their course:

- For students aged 21 and over at the start of their course, their own socio-economic background is recorded.
- For students aged under 21 at the start of their course, the socio-economic background of their parent, step-parent or guardian who earns the most is recorded.

**Table 1: NS-SEC analytic classes and report groupings**

Groups used in this report	NS-SEC analytic classes
High SES	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1) Higher managerial, administrative and professional occupations (1.1: Large employers and higher managerial and administrative occupations; 1.2: Higher professional occupations)</li> <li>2) Lower managerial, administrative and professional occupations</li> <li>3) Intermediate occupations</li> </ol>
Medium SES	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>4) Small employers and own account workers</li> <li>5) Lower supervisory and technical occupations</li> <li>6) Semi-routine occupations</li> </ol>
Low SES	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>7) Routine occupations</li> <li>8) Never worked and long-term unemployed</li> </ol>

### **Ethnicity:**

It is HESA's practice to adopt national classifications where they exist and are appropriate. The use of Census-aligned ethnicity coding in the student record is an example of this. The coding frame is recommended by the Office for National Statistics for UK-wide data collection. However, there are variations to the Census ethnicity coding adopted in Scotland and Northern Ireland. The ethnic category groupings are:

### **Census 2011 (used from 2012–13):**

- White includes White, White – Scottish, Irish Traveller, Gypsy or Traveller plus Other White background.
- Black includes Black or Black British – Caribbean, Black or Black British – African and other Black background.
- Asian includes Asian or Asian British – Indian, Asian or Asian British – Pakistani, Asian or Asian British – Bangladeshi, Chinese and other Asian background.
- Mixed includes mixed – White and Black Caribbean, mixed – White and Black African, mixed – White and Asian and other mixed background.
- Other includes Arab and other ethnic background.
- Unknown/not applicable is used to denote those who do not have a permanent address in the UK, whose permanent address is unknown (2014–15 onwards), who have refused to give ethnic information or whose ethnicity is unknown.

### **Disability:**

With the introduction of the Disability Equality Duty, and on the recommendation of Advance HE, HESA introduced a version of the coding frame introduced by the Disability Rights Commission. In the report we use the following disability coding: 1) Physical disability 2) Learning disability 3) Mental disability and 4) other types of disability.

### **Empirical specification**

We use the following empirical specification to study the inequalities in academic and labour market outcomes by our variables of interests (gender, ethnicity, disability and SES). For ethnicity, rather than studying the differences between White and minority students, we study the differences between White, Black, Asian and other minority students. Similarly, for disability, we focus on different types of disabilities. For SES, we use three categories: high, medium and low.

$$Y_i = \beta_0 + \beta_1 Y_{it-1} + \beta_2 Female + \beta_3 Ethnicity + \beta_4 Disability + \beta_5 SES + \beta_6 \gamma + \beta_7 \sigma + \epsilon$$

In this specification, we also control for cohort and university/mission groups. This is because students graduating in different years might face different peer groups that might affect their academic outcomes. Similarly, labour market conditions might be different for different cohorts and that might increase or decrease the differences in the variables of interests. Students graduating from certain HEIs might encounter conditional barriers upon their graduation such as a requirement from some employers that potential employees hold degrees from Russell Group universities. Here,  $\gamma$  represents cohort fixed effects and  $\sigma$  represents university/mission groups (Advani et al., 2020).  $\epsilon$  is the unobservable factors.

## **FINDINGS**

### **Part 1: Diversity and trends over time**

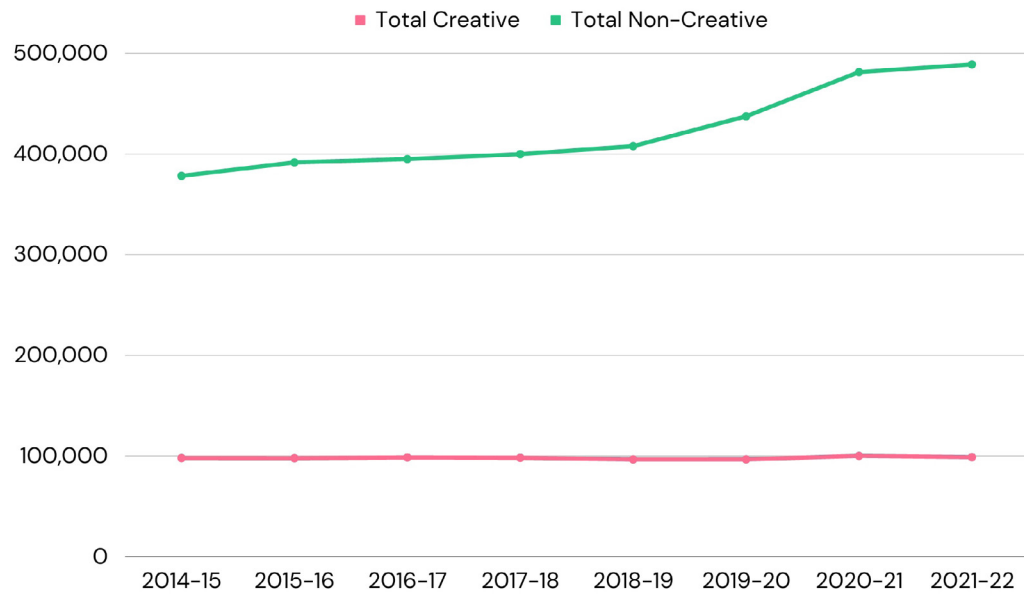
Here we discuss and focus on specific interesting aspects of the overall trends. The full list of each subject group is in Appendix 3.1.

The data included in Table 2 displays the most recent trends in enrolment from the HESA website (first-year only, first degree, UK domiciled, both part-time and full-time students). As we can see, in the past eight years, the overall number of UK students has grown, but the percentage of students in creative disciplines has gone down from 15 per cent to 12 per cent of the cohort.

**Table 2: Decline in overall creative subject degree enrolment (HESA website data)**

	2014-15	2015-16	2016-17	2017-18	2018-19	2019-20	2020-21	2021-22
Total creative	97,805 (15%)	97,645 (14%)	98,430 (14%)	98,085 (14%)	96,435 (14%)	96,510 (13%)	99,970 (12%)	98,675 (12%)
Total non-creative	378,270 (85%)	391,600 (86%)	394,910 (86%)	399,855 (86%)	407,775 (86%)	437,375 (87%)	481,380 (88%)	488,965 (88%)
All	476,075 (100%)	489,245 (100%)	493,340 (100%)	497,940 (100%)	504,210 (100%)	533,885 (100%)	581,350 (100%)	587,640 (100%)

**Figure 1: Decline in overall creative subject degree enrolment (HESA website data)**

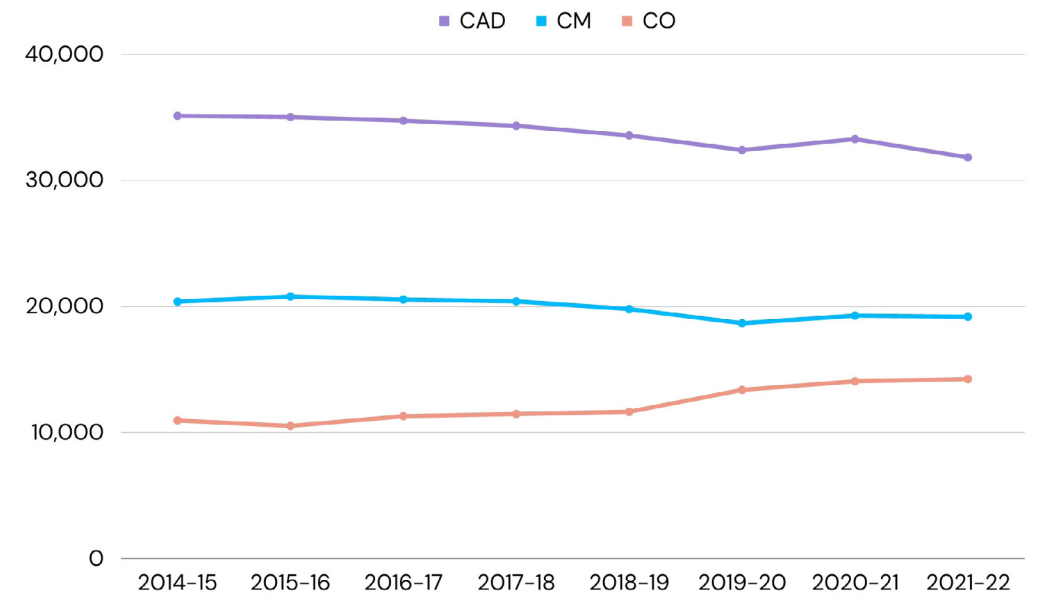


If we look more closely at creative subjects, we see an increase in students in the creative other (CO) category (6 per cent) but a slight decrease in the creative media (CM) group (2 per cent) and 4 per cent decrease in the creative arts and design group (CAD).

**Table 3: Degree enrolment for creative subjects (HESA website data)**

	2014-15	2015-16	2016-17	2017-18	2018-19	2019-20	2020-21	2021-22
CAD	35,135 (53%)	35,035 (53%)	34,750 (52%)	34,345 (52%)	33,575 (52%)	32,420 (50%)	33,290 (50%)	31,835 (49%)
CM	20,385 (31%)	20,785 (31%)	20,550 (31%)	20,405 (31%)	19,790 (30%)	18,670 (29%)	19,275 (29%)	19,185 (29%)
CO	10,950 (16%)	10,520 (16%)	11,290 (17%)	11,465 (17%)	11,640 (18%)	13,375 (21%)	14,065 (21%)	14,235 (22%)
Total creative	66,470 (100%)	66,340 (100%)	66,590 (100%)	66,215 (100%)	65,005 (100%)	64,465 (100%)	66,630 (100%)	65,255 (100%)

**Figure 2: Degree enrolment for creative subjects (HESA website data)**



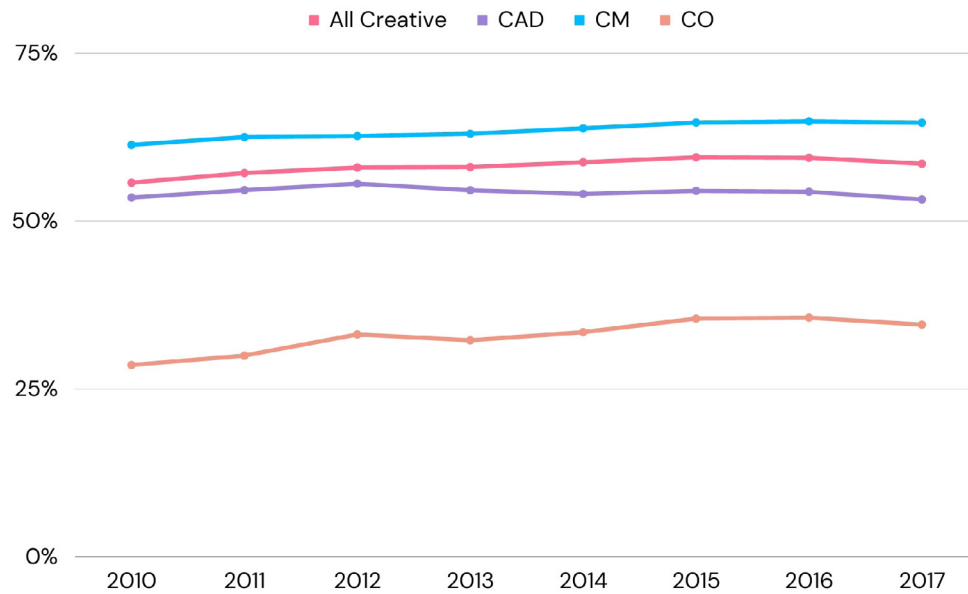
Below, we focus on some interesting trends emerging from the 2010-2017 HESA's Student Records, with more detailed charts included in Appendix 3.2.



### Gender

Overall, the proportion of women has been higher and stable between 2010 and 2017. However, one visible trend that has not changed over time is that across creative subject courses, the higher proportion of women is mainly in CAD and CM courses, while the presence of women is much lower (almost half) in CO courses.

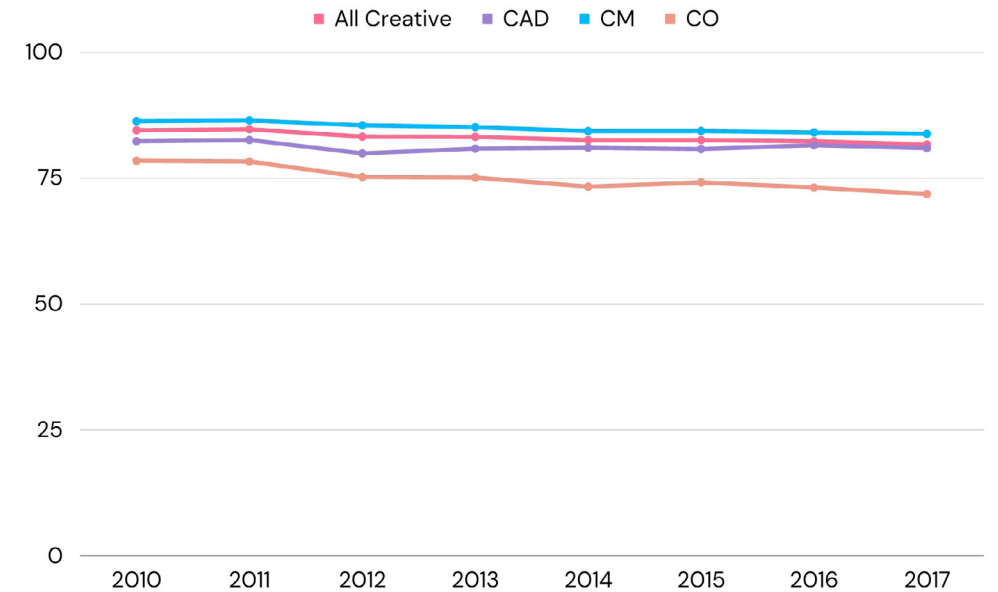
**Figure 3: Proportion of female students over time (HESA's Student Records 2010–2017)**



### Ethnicity

Overall, we see a slight increase in ethnically diverse students (see Figure 4). The courses attracting a more diverse cohort are CO courses, including games and music technology.

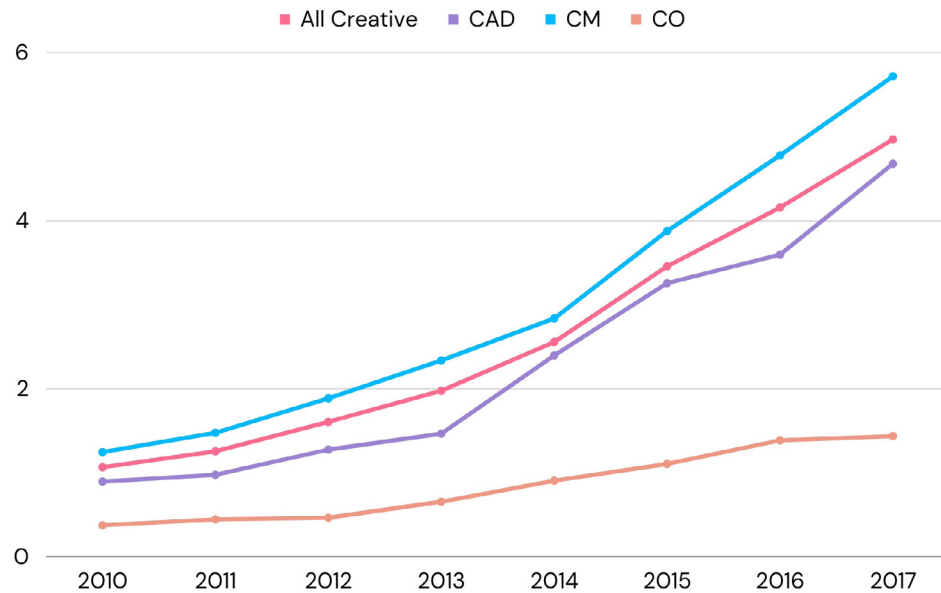
**Figure 4: Proportion of White students over time (HESA's Student Records 2010–2017)**



### Disability

With regards to students declaring learning disabilities (Figure 5), participation has increased significantly in the period (especially after 2013) but mainly in CM and CAD courses.

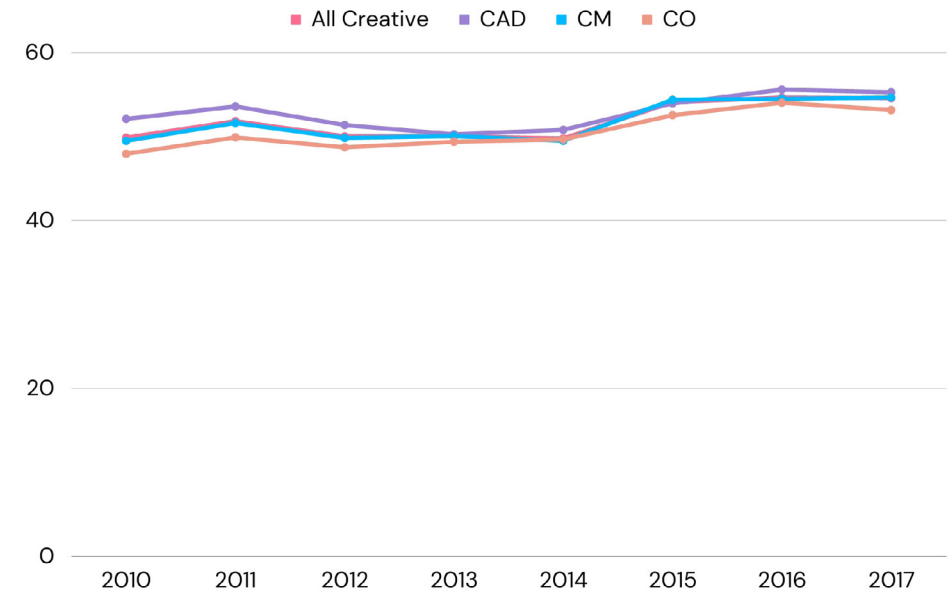
**Figure 5: Proportion of students with a learning disability over time (HESA's Student Records 2010–2017)**



### Socio-economic status

For socio-economic status, which is one way of thinking about social class, we see a trend of more high-SES students in creative HE subjects (Figure 6). Although this reflects broader trends across HE, it suggests an ongoing class issue for creative subjects.

**Figure 6: Proportion of students with a high-SES over time (HESA's Student Records 2010–2017)**



### Part 2: Diversity dynamics in the 2015–16 to 2016–17 cohorts

The data analysis results are presented here with key headlines and reference to the logistic regression tables (see Appendix 3.3) generated by our analysis.

### Who studies creative subjects?

Table 4 presents an overview of who studies creative subjects at HE level in our dataset. For the 2015–16 to 2016–17 cohorts, women are the majority group – but this is in line with general gender trends across all HE subjects. However, as illustrated, there is a higher concentration of White students in creative HE subjects and a lower concentration of students from other ethnic backgrounds (with the Asian student population half that of those on other courses). Creative subjects show a higher proportion of students with disabilities, especially mental and learning disabilities. The socio-economic composition does not present much variation from the general percentage of the all subjects group.

**Table 4: HESA data, overview of our sample (HESA DLHE Survey)**

Characteristics	All	Creative subjects
Female	58%	58.22%
<b>Ethnicity</b>		
White	81.75%	89.02%
Black	6.18%	4.85%
Asian	10.81%	5.05%
Other	1.26%	1.08%
<b>Disability</b>		
No disability	85.55%	80.20%
Physical	0.82%	0.88%
Mental	2.45%	3.34%
Long-term	1.35%	1.34%
Multiple	1.06%	1.20%
Learning	7.61%	11.83%
Other	1.15%	1.21%
<b>Socio-economic status</b>		
High SES	53.39%	52.44%
Medium SES	21.60%	21.88%
Low SES	25.00%	25.68%
Observations	524,555	81,040

In our regression analysis (all tables from the regression analysis can be included in Appendix 3.3), we see that while there seems to be no gender difference (Table 3a) in who studies for a creative subject, there are ethnic and socio-economic differences. There are also some differences across different disability categories.

In the last column of Table 3a, where we control for university, cohort and entry tariff, we see that ethnic minority students (regardless of their race) are less likely to study a creative subject at university compared to White students. Similarly, we see that students coming from medium and low-SES families are less likely to study a creative subject than their high-SES peers.

When it comes to disabilities, however, the situation is a little different. Those from some disability categories, namely those with physical, mental, multiple and learning disabilities, are more likely to study a creative subject over other degree options and even between these groups there are some differences. For example, those with a physical disability are less likely to study for a creative subject than those with mental disabilities.

#### **What are the education outcomes of creative students in relation to their diversity?**

When we look at students who study for a creative subject at university in Table 3b, we see that while women are less likely to achieve a first, they are more likely to achieve a good degree. Women are more likely to get an upper-second-class degree than their male peers.

Women have higher degree completion rates than men. The results on degree completion and the likelihood of getting a good degree are consistent with the wider literature across gendered degree outcomes. While one might expect this to have an effect on labour market outcomes, it could be the case that final grade attainment matters less for creative occupations or for the jobs that students who study a creative subject hold once they are in the labour market.

We also see that Black, Asian and Other – Mixed students are less likely to be awarded a first or upper-second-class degree. This confirms wider research in the ethnicity degree awarding gap in the UK (Richardson, 2015; TASO, 2023). In the case of creative HE, the differences are quite striking. For example, if we look at Black students, they are 16.1 percentage points (pp) less likely to

be awarded a first and 21.9 pp less likely to be awarded a good degree than their White peers.

Similarly, Asian students are 12.8 and 17.4 pp less likely to be awarded a good-degree outcome than their White peers. In addition, Black and Asian students are 0.3 and 0.7 pp more likely not to complete their final degree. The data suggests a double disadvantage for Black, Asian and Other – Mixed students both in terms of degree completion and award attainment on creative HE subjects.

In terms of socio-economic differences, we see that students coming from middle and low-SES families have lower attainment rates than those coming from high-SES families. While the difference in the likelihood of getting a good-degree outcome is not large, in the last column, we see that there are no differences in the likelihood of non-completion.

While the data indicates that overall, students with a disability have more access to creative subjects (see Table 3a), there is variance with regards to attainment (see Table 3b). Those with mental, multiple or learning disabilities are less likely to be awarded a good degree than those with no disability. As there are more students with these disabilities in these subjects, this is not surprising. While we also control for the entry tariff score, issues that are not captured by the entry tariff scores might play a role here. These students may also encounter institutions that are not set up to properly account for their disabilities during their education, and this might affect their graduation outcomes.

### **What are the general employment outcomes of creative students in relation to their diversity?**

Table 3c presents the employment outcomes for those who graduate from a creative subject.

The data indicates that women graduates are less likely to be in full-time employment and less likely to be unemployed. This suggests that they are more likely to be in part-time employment (as concurrent in the wider literature e.g. Brook et al., 2022).

In terms of graduates from non-White ethnic backgrounds, lower SES and those who are identified as having a disability, we see similar trends. They are less likely to be in full-time employment and employment in general but more likely to be unemployed and be studying for a further subject.

The result on the likelihood of further study is striking. As

stated, women, non-White, lower SES and disabled graduates have lower employment prospects following graduation than their male, White, non-disabled, high-SES peers. The results on full-time employment indicate an issue with employers. One hypothesis is that once marginalised graduates enter the job market and are not able to access employment, they seek alternative pathways and/or return to further education. While it is not within the scope of this paper to make substantive conclusions, we recommend further research into immediate post-graduation employment trends for creative HE students.

### **Who goes into creative jobs?**

While the results on entry to the general labour market are important, it is also crucial to study the jobs that graduates hold. Here, we create five categories for jobs that graduates hold:

- Creative occupations
- Creative industries
- Specialist creatives: Those working in creative industries in a creative occupation
- Embedded creatives: Those working in a creative occupation in a non-creative industry
- Support workers: Those working in a non-creative occupation in a creative industry

Table 3d analyses all graduates entering creative jobs. Table 3e focuses only on those who studied a creative subject at university.

For people with any sort of degree, rather than just a creative degree, the results in Table 3e show that women are less likely to work in all five categories of creative work. The gender difference ranges from 1.5 pp for support workers to 6.1 pp for creative occupations.

Similarly, there are strong ethnic differences as well as some differences by disability. For example, Black and Asian graduates are a lot less likely to hold creative labour market outcomes in all categories but support worker category, with the differences ranging from 1.2 pp to 3.8 pp.

There are also socio-economic differences, albeit smaller ones. The differences between high-SES and medium SES vary between 0.6 pp and 2 pp while the ones between high SES and low SES vary between 0.5 pp and 1.4 pp. There are also gaps

between those with no disability and those with multiple or learning disabilities but the direction of these differences are in the opposite way. Those with these disabilities are more likely to have creative jobs.

What about those with creative degrees? Table 3e shows a similar picture for those with any degree in any subject. women graduates are less likely to have creative jobs but the gender differences are not as striking as the ones in Table 3d. This suggests that men who studied a non-creative subject are a lot more likely to have a creative job than women.

For ethnic, socio-economic and disability differences in access to these jobs, we see a completely different picture. For ethnicity, disability and SES, differences are slightly higher for those who studied a creative subject. These two tables show the advantaged groups (male, White, no disability) are a lot more likely to be able to hold creative jobs upon graduation than their disadvantaged peers.

## CONCLUSION

Our analysis of HESA data has shown a range of long-standing issues for creative HE. Some of these match more general issues facing all HE subjects. Much of British HE has issues related to exclusions associated with ethnicity, class and disability. Indeed, many of the attempts to address general inequalities of ethnicity, class and disability in HE are discussed in our report on widening participation. In addition, there are clear patterns of difference by gender between arts and humanities, social sciences and science subjects.

Despite this relationship to general higher education inequalities, creative HE faces its own dynamics. As we have seen, there is a potentially positive story to be told in association with disability; there is an opportunity to learn 'What Works' that could be applied beyond just creative courses.

At the same time, inequalities of gender remind both creative HE and the creative sector of their entrenched sexism. This is demonstrated by the difference between the higher proportions of women in creative HE and the barriers they face compared to men when they enter the creative economy.

Similar issues are echoed in the inequalities of ethnicity and class. It has not been possible within the scope of this report to consider detailed, intersectional analysis of the relationship between diversity and creative HE. Focus on the trends of certain groups, for example, Black women, into creative professional pathways such as architecture or video games is not possible due to data protection laws linked to disclosure levels. This report has instead looked at general trends across grouped subject areas to avoid disclosure.

What this, and our other reports, demonstrates is the need to recognise the connections between inequality of access to creative HE and the inequality of recognition and reward in the creative and cultural job market. These inequalities speak to a significant challenge for creative HE to change its approach to admissions, support on courses, assessment and marking practices, and careers advice and employability. They also speak to creative and cultural employers, reinforcing the argument outlined in *Creative Majority* of the importance of fostering equitable recruitment (Wreyford et al., 2021)..

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## APPENDICES

[Appendix 3.1: List of JACS codes](#)

[Appendix 3.2: Diversity characteristics of creative subjects students across creative subjects groups \(HESA's Student Records 2010–2017\)](#)

[Appendix 3.3: Regression analysis tables \(HESA's Student Records and DLHE Survey, 2015–16 to 2016–17\)](#)

