

MAKING THE CREATIVE MAJORITY

APPG for
Creative
Diversity

A report for the All-Party Parliamentary Group
for Creative Diversity on 'What Works' to support
diversity and inclusion in creative education and the
talent pipeline, with a focus on the 16+ age category.

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FOREWORD

By the Parliamentary Chairs and Officers of the APPG for Creative DiversityA

The urgency to build a more inclusive future for our creative industries has become more pronounced than ever. The repercussions of the pandemic threaten to marginalize diverse talent even further, narrowing the opportunities within the creative sector to a limited demographic that fails to reflect the rich tapestry of our nation.

The All-Party Parliamentary Group (APPG) for Creative Diversity exists to help foster a creative sector where all talent, irrespective of background, can flourish. This report, *Making the Creative Majority*, is a significant part of our journey. It brings to light stark truths about the experience of emerging creatives from under-represented backgrounds in Higher Education and highlights the necessity to rethink and reimagine pathways into the sector.

This APPG report's findings illuminate not just the challenges but also the opportunities that lie ahead. The under-representation of individuals from global majority backgrounds, the clear class crisis, and gender disparities highlight an urgent call to action. If we are to remain a creative nation, systemic change is not just necessary but absolutely vital.

But the problems facing the sector are not unsolvable. This report, the culmination of 18 months of in-depth research, also critically sets out 'What Works' to begin building a more equitable creative education system for those aged 16+ and to dismantling the obstacles facing the next generation of creative talent.

Our sincere thanks to the APPG's partners for supporting this work and guiding the research: King's College London, University of the Arts London, University of Manchester, the Creative Industries Policy & Evidence Centre, YouTube and Paul Hamlyn Foundation; to the report's core authors: Tamsyn Dent, Roberta Comunian, Dave O'Brien, and Natalie Wreyford; to the group's secretariat: Alex Pleasants and Joanna Abeyie; and to all those who participated in the project.

Delivering the objectives set out in this report will require boldness in leadership and collaboration between policymakers, education providers and creative organisations. But it is absolutely essential to ensure that the creative sector of the future represents all of us – and that every young person who has the talent and the ambition to play a part within it can do so.

Beatrice Pembroke

Executive Director, King’s Culture

“ King’s College London is proud to have worked with the APPG for Creative Diversity and this influential group of partners to uncover tangible ways we can ensure a more just and inclusive creative workforce, starting with more sustainable and equitable entry paths into the sector, including the vital role of Higher Education. This research should be seen as a call-to-action, as the findings clearly show that efforts to widen participation and pathways into HE are currently not resulting in a more diverse workforce. I hope that the vital recommendations made in this report will help provide a useful guide for those with the power to make the necessary structural changes – from policymakers and creative organisations, to businesses and educational institutions – that will have long lasting impact that benefits us all.”A

Professor Fiona Devine CBE FAcSS FRSA

Vice-President and Dean of the Faculty of Humanities, The University of Manchester

“ The University of Manchester is delighted to be part of the Creative Diversity APPG’s new research on creative education. Alongside our research on the subject, the University is currently pioneering new approaches to creative education, including new BA and MA programmes in Creative and Cultural Industries and Digital Media, Culture and Society. As a result, the APPG’s work is important for Manchester’s approach to widening participation in creative education. Moreover, by setting out ‘what works’ to support a more equitable, diverse, and inclusive creative education system,

the report and its policy recommendations offer an important challenge to policymakers, universities, and creative organisations. The challenge of building a more diverse creative education system is one Manchester is proud to be meeting.”

Roni Brown

Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Academic) UAL

“ University of the Arts London welcomes and supports this crucial report from the APPG for Creative Diversity. We believe it is the responsibility of everyone within the creative education sector to offer creative learning opportunities for all students, to champion and promote a wide range of further and higher education learning outcomes and engage with future employers to ensure that we have an equitable, inclusive, and diverse creative economy. UAL is committed to bringing high-quality education to more students than ever before. The findings in the report, especially around the role of research in evidence informed interventions and measurable impact, will guide us as we reshape our efforts to support students from the widest possible backgrounds to access creative education. Having a diverse student population, as well as a diverse workforce in the creative industries is crucial for society, prosperity, and the future of creativity. UAL looks forward to engaging with this work further.”

Moira Sinclair

Chief Executive, Paul Hamlyn Foundation

“ We have known for some time that having a degree is seen by many as a pre-requisite for a career in the creative industries. This research demonstrates why and how access to higher education is so critical to any ambition to change the diversity of the overall workforce, and why alternative routes need much more support as well as initiatives from within. The message feels timely and important because it focus on the need for structural change rather than placing the onus for navigating the system onto individuals who want to pursue their talent and make their creative and economic contribution. The report provides some tangible steps – for government, for universities, for creative employers – that I hope will form a roadmap for action.”

Lilli Geissendorfer

Deputy Director of Creative PEC

“ The Creative PEC is delighted to continue its support for the APPG’s work. Questions of diversity need to be central to current debates around creative education, and the APPG’s intervention has done much to show both the systemic failures as well as offer policy solutions. This report provides a crucial challenge for policy makers, higher education institutions, and creative organisations to work together to create more routes for diverse talent to get the skills and qualifications that will ensure the long-term success of Britain’s creative industries.”A

Alison Lomax

Managing Director of YouTube UK and Ireland

“Creative diversity is at the heart of YouTube. We’re committed to supporting next generation talent via our Futuremakers programmes and to providing a platform where artists and creators from across the UK can build sustainable careers. We are proud to be sponsoring this important research which seeks to address obstacles to equity, diversity and inclusion within 16+ creative education and pathways. A person’s background, race or socio-economic status should never be a barrier to a creative career and to contributing to the UK’s creative industries”



ABOUT THE APPG

The All-Party Parliamentary Group (APPG) for Creative Diversity was formed in May 2019 by Ed Vaizey MP (now Lord Vaizey). It was set up with the support of Alex Pleasants, formerly Ed Vaizey's senior policy adviser, and Joanna Abeyie MBE, leading diversity consultant and CEO of Blue Moon.

Its aim is to engage with industry and government to identify and tackle obstacles to equity, diversity and inclusion in the creative sector. Baroness Deborah Bull and Chi Onwurah MP are now co-chairs, giving the group prominent voices in both the House of Commons and the House of Lords. The group's vice-chairs and officers bring a further wealth of political and industry experience and include Baroness Floella Benjamin, Baroness Jane Bonham-Carter, Lord Ed Vaizey, Helen Grant MP, Kim Johnson MP, Baroness Gail Rebuck. Alex Pleasants and Joanna Abeyie MBE provide the secretariat for the group.

Professor Roberta Comunian, Dr Tamsyn Dent and Dr Natalie Wreyford from the Department of Culture, Media & Creative Industries, Faculty of Arts & Humanities, King's College London, alongside Professor Dave O'Brien from the Department of Art History and Cultural Practices, School of Arts, Languages and Cultures, University of Manchester constituted the core research team. They were supported by Tessa Read from Creative Shift, Academic Enhancement at University of the Arts London, Dr Mark Taylor from the Sheffield Methods Institute, University of Sheffield, Professor Sarah Jewell, University of Reading and post-doctoral researchers Dr Atif Ghani (University of the Arts London), Dr Ruth Brown, Dr Kate Shorvon, Scott Caizley, Aditya Polisetty and Yolanda Tong Wu (King's College London) and Dr Sonkurt Sen (University of Bonn).

The Chairs and Officers of the APPG are:

Co-Chair Chi Onwurah MP (Labour)

Co-Chair Baroness Bull (Crossbench)

Vice Chair Baroness Benjamin (Liberal Democrat)

Vice Chair Baroness Bonham-Carter (Liberal Democrat)

Vice Chair Lord Vaizey (Conservative)

Vice Chair Helen Grant MP (Conservative)

Officer Kim Johnson MP (Labour)

Officer Baroness Rebuck (Labour)

With thanks to the APPG's sponsors: King's College London, The University of Manchester, University of the Arts London, the Paul Hamlyn Foundation and YouTube. The APPG's work is also supported by the Creative Industries Policy and Evidence Centre (PEC). With thanks to King's Culture, the knowledge exchange institute for cultural and creative collaborations at King's College London, including colleagues Beatrice Pembroke, Daniel Walker and Emma Hardy.

CONTENTS

- 3 **INTRODUCTION**
Roberta Comunian, Tamsyn Dent, Dave O'Brien,
Tessa Read and Natalie Wreyford
- 20 **CREATIVE HIGHER EDUCATION:
INSIGHTS FROM UCAS AND CENSUS 2021**
Mark Taylor, Aditya Polisetty, Dave O'Brien,
Roberta Comunian, Tamsyn Dent and Natalie Wreyford
- 56 **CREATIVE HIGHER EDUCATION:
GRADUATE DATA AND DIVERSITY MEASURES**
Sonkurt Sen, Roberta Comunian, Dave O'Brien,
Sarah Jewell and Tamsyn Dent
- 84 **'WHAT WORKS' TO SUPPORT EQUITY,
DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION IN CREATIVE
HIGHER EDUCATION: WIDENING
PARTICIPATION**
Tamsyn Dent, Ruth Brown, Scott Caizley, Atif Ghani,
Dave O'Brien, Tessa Read, Natalie Wreyford and
Yolanda Tong Wu
- 122 **'WHAT WORKS' TO SUPPORT EQUITY,
DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION IN CREATIVE
EDUCATION: WORK INTEGRATED LEARNING
AND INTERNSHIPS**
Tamsyn Dent, Kate Shorvon, Natalie Wreyford,
Dave O'Brien and Atif Ghani
- 152 **'WHAT WORKS' TO SUPPORT EQUITY,
DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION IN CREATIVE
EDUCATION: APPRENTICESHIPS**
Natalie Wreyford, Dave O'Brien, Tamsyn Dent,
Atif Ghani and Yolanda Tong Wu
- 192 **CONCLUSIONS AND POLICY
RECOMMENDATIONS**



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.

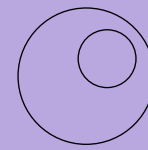
Creative education is an important area of concern for policymakers, creative practitioners and the public. A recently published government response to the higher education reform consultation (Department for Education, 2023) indicates concern

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

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

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)A	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.

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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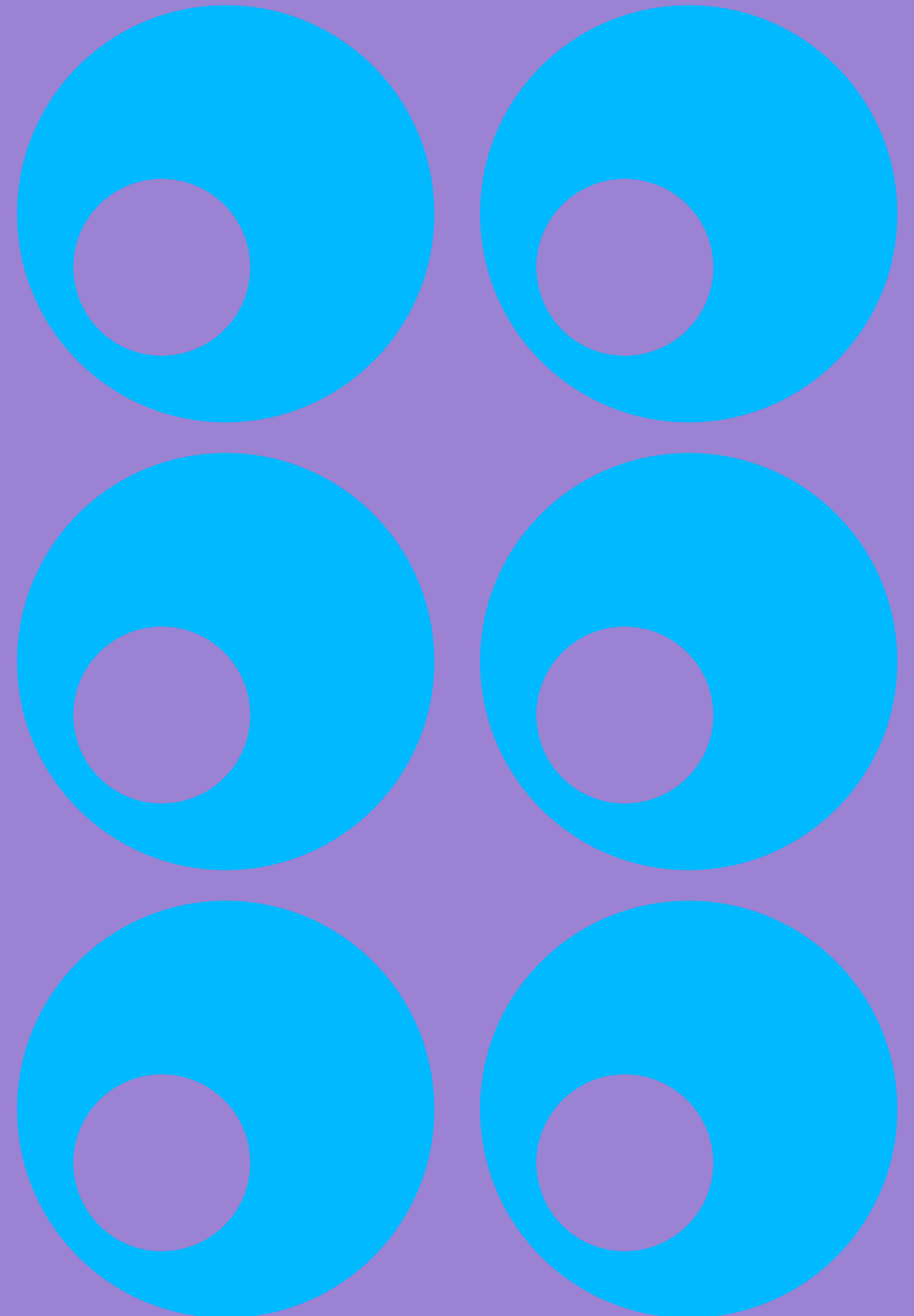
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APPENDICES

[Appendix 1.1: Creative HE definitionA](#)

[Appendix 1.2: Roundtable partners](#)



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.

CONTENTS

24	OVERVIEW
25	DATA AND METHODS
25	Census data
25	UCAS data
26	DIVERSITY MEASURES AND REPORTING UCAS DATA
26	Gender
26	Socio-economic group
27	Ethnic group
27A	Course identifierA
27	Number of applications
27	Number of offers as of 30 June
27	Number of acceptances
27	Disclosure controls
28	INSIGHTS FROM CENSUS 2021 AND UCAS CYCLE YEAR 2022
28A	Creative workers' qualification levelsA
38	UCAS DATA
38	Who goes into creative higher education?
38	Gender
41	Ethnicity
44	Class
47	Type of university
51	CONCLUSION
53	REFERENCES
54	APPENDIX

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

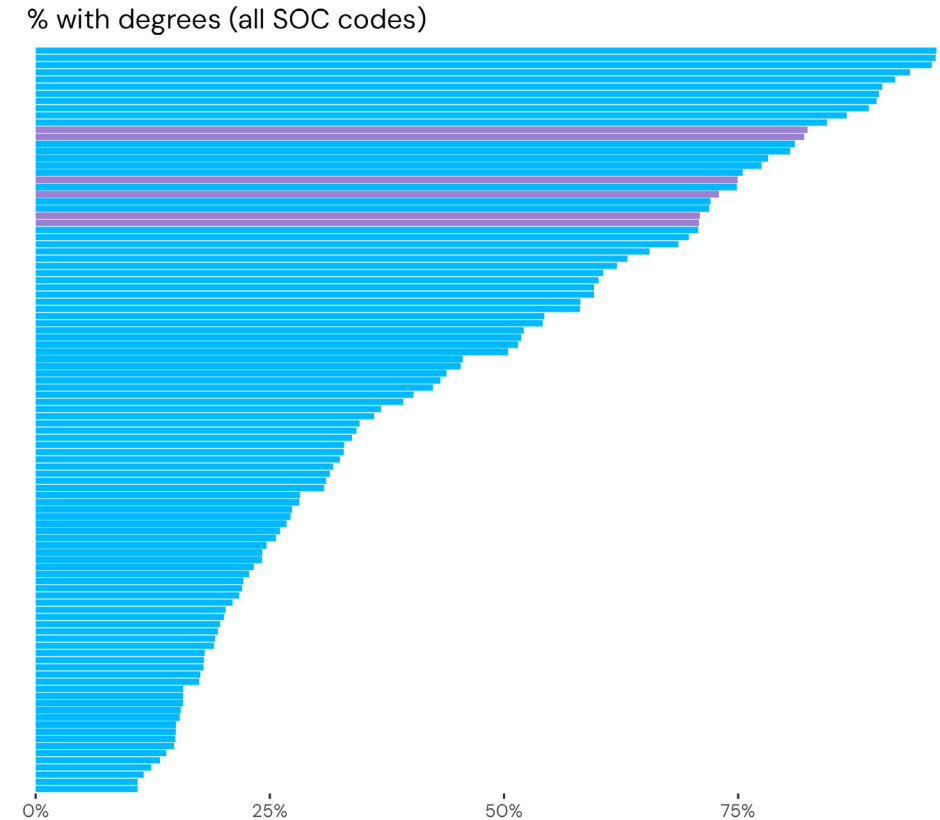
In order to understand 'What Works' to support equity, diversity, and inclusion in creative education, it is important to know more about educational routes into creative jobs. This section presents some descriptive statistics derived from the 2021 census, to give an up-to-date picture of creative workers'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

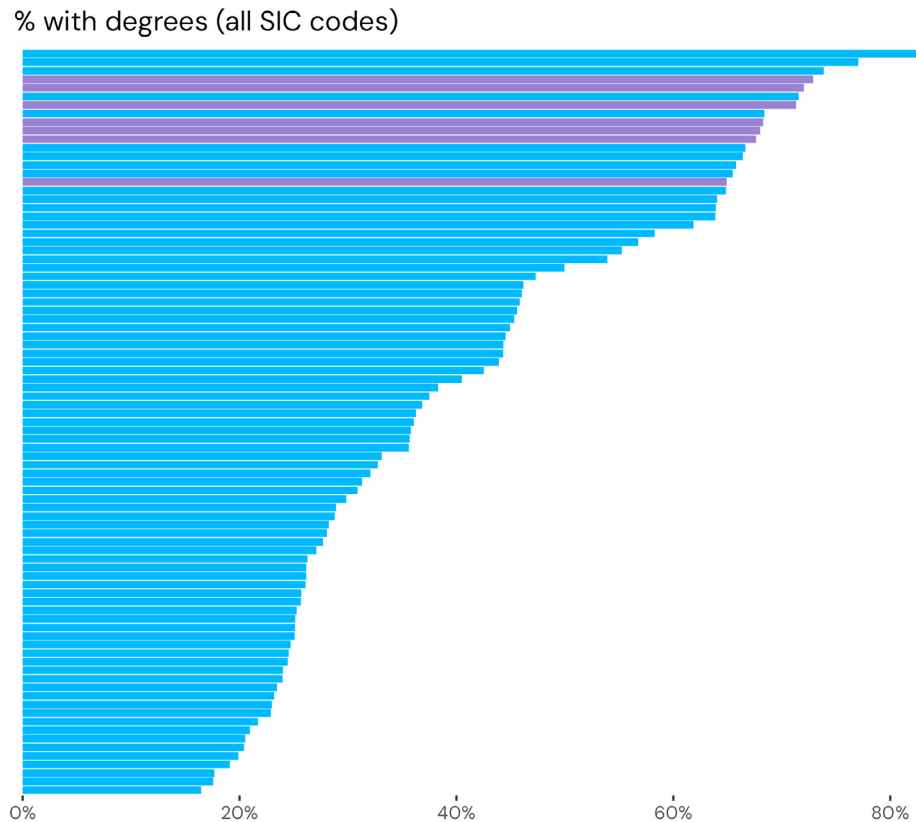
As we noted in our introductory paper, a degree is not a necessary qualification for getting work in a creative occupation;

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)



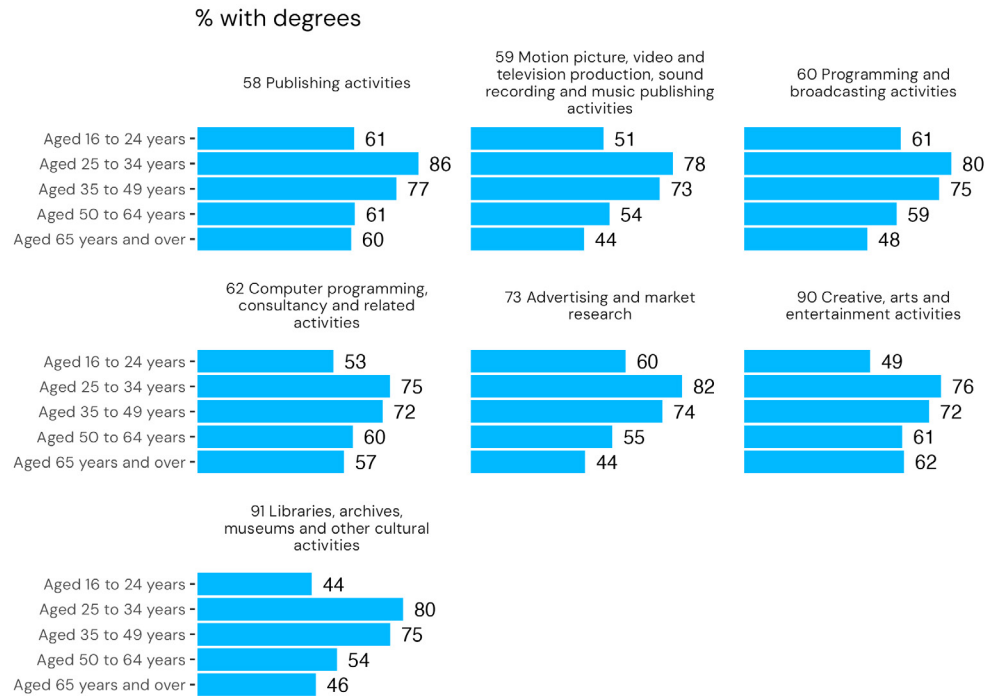
Creative industries are again towards the top of the graph. Advertising and market research (72 per cent); computer programming, consultancy and related activities (68 per cent); creative, arts and entertainment activities (68 per cent); libraries, archives, museums and other cultural activities (65 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.

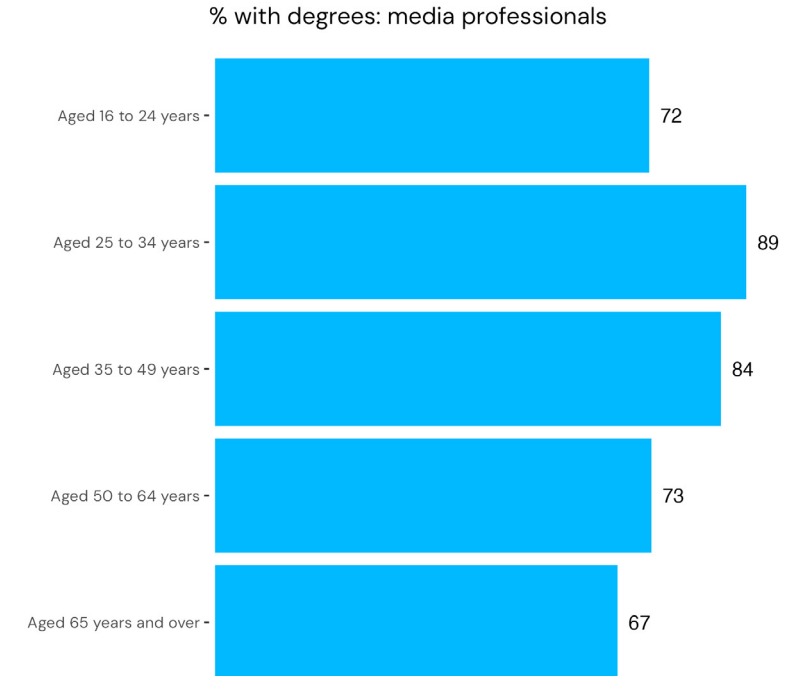
Figure 3 Percentage of degree holders across ages groups across creative industries



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).

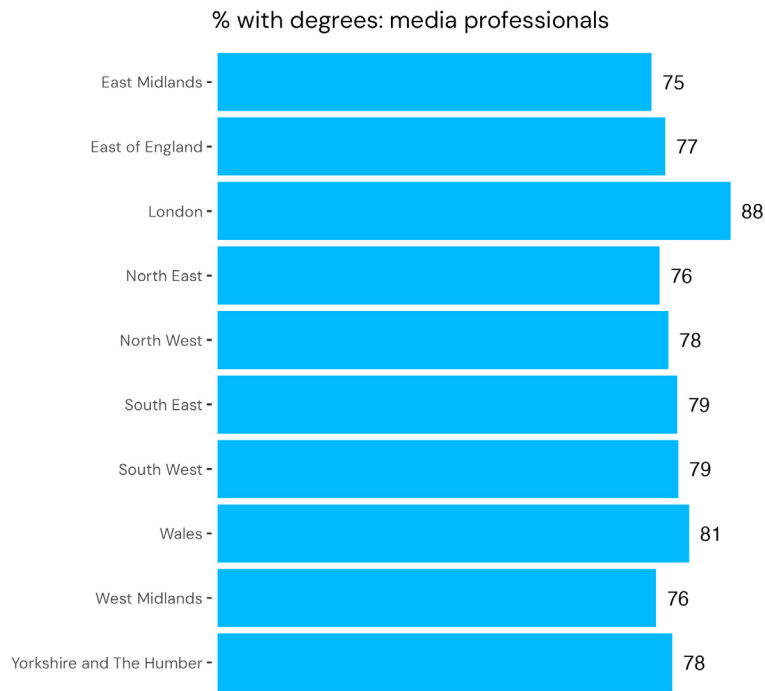
A further illustration of the dominance of degree education can be seen with a dive into a specific sector. Figure 4 looks at media professionals. This three-digit SOC code includes occupations such as newspaper editors, broadcast journalists, and PR (Public Relations) professionals and creative directors.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

Figure 4 Percentage of degree holders amongst media professionals



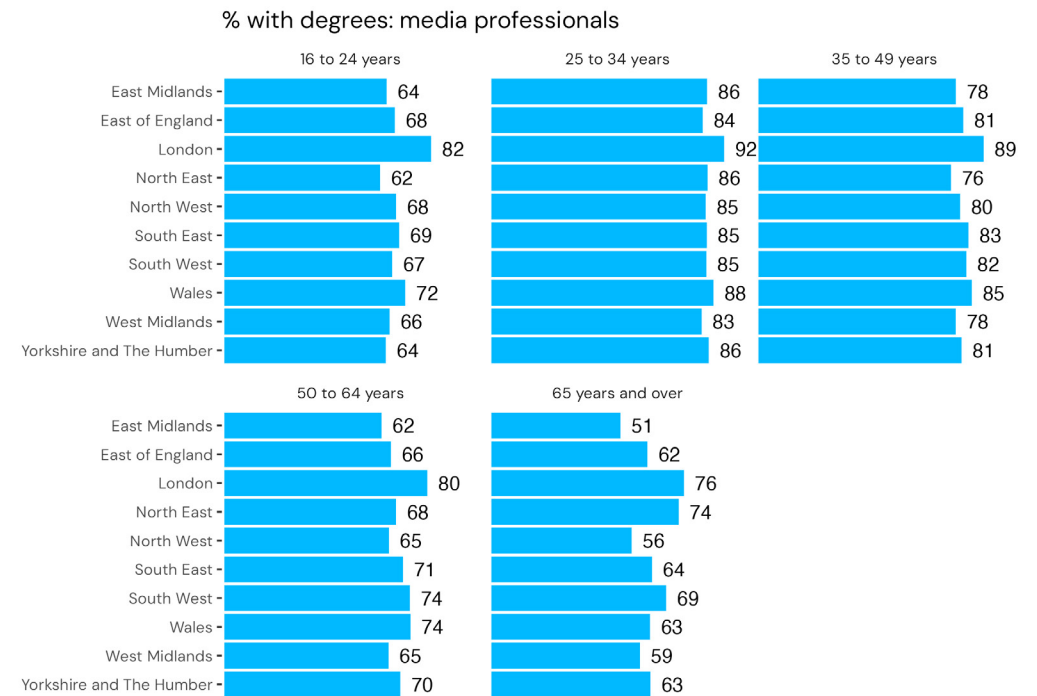
Where these jobs are in the country matters too. The high proportion of younger media professionals with degrees is echoed when we look at levels of degrees in these occupations around the country. Figure 5 shows that 88 per cent of media professionals working in London have a degree, which is higher 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



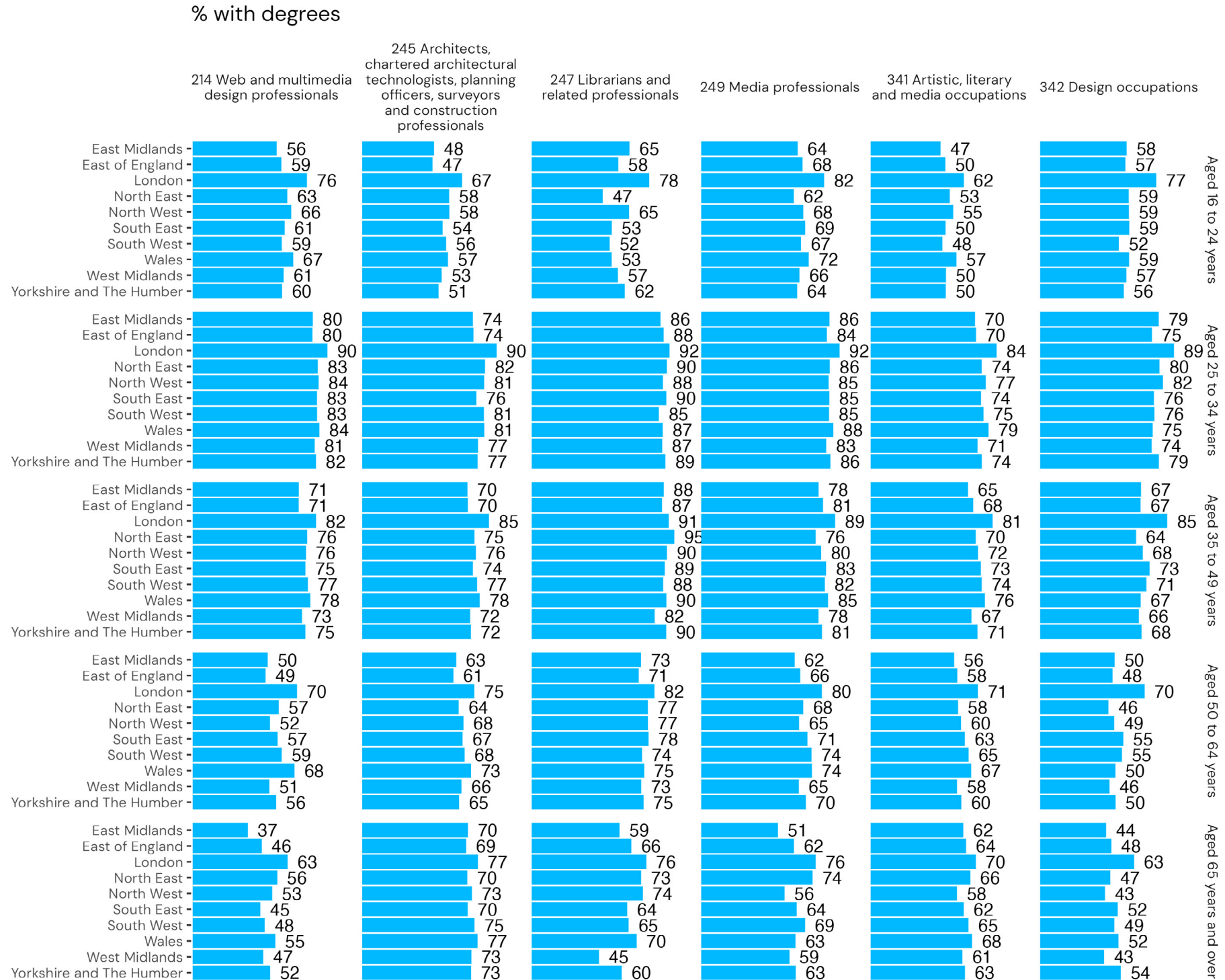
The higher levels of degree-holding remain the case when we look at the relationship between age and geography. Figure 6 shows age, geography and the proportion of media professionals with a degree. Over 80 per cent of workers in London in all age groups under 65 have degrees, including over 90 per cent 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?

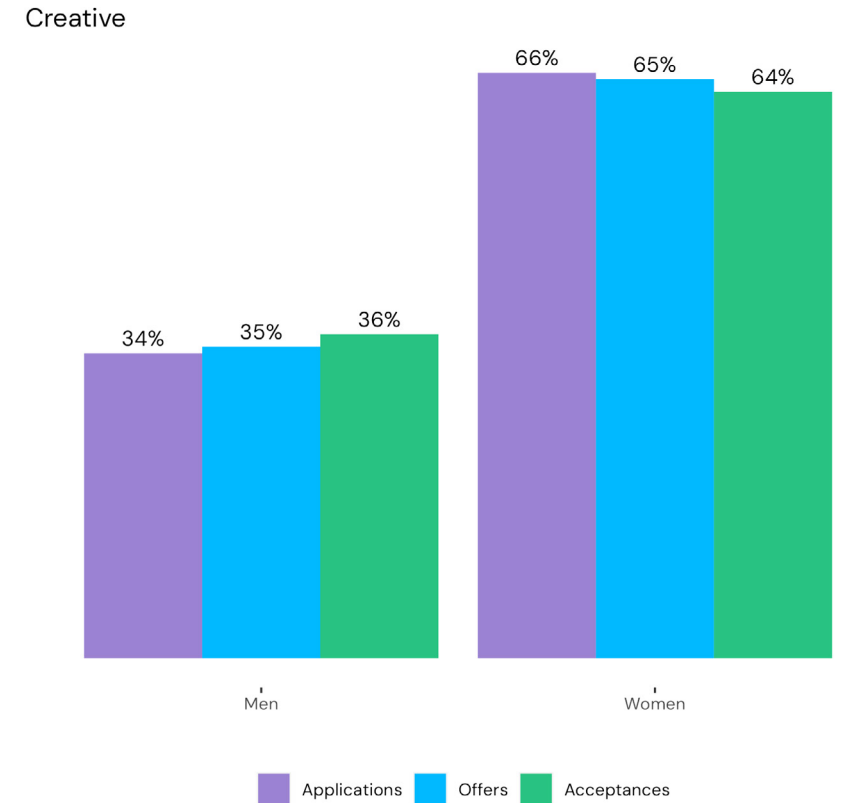
Using data from UCAS on the 2022 entry to higher education cycle, we present the demographics of applications to study creative courses; offers in response to those applications; and acceptances of those offers. We focus on gender, race and social class in creative HE, with detailed analysis of other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



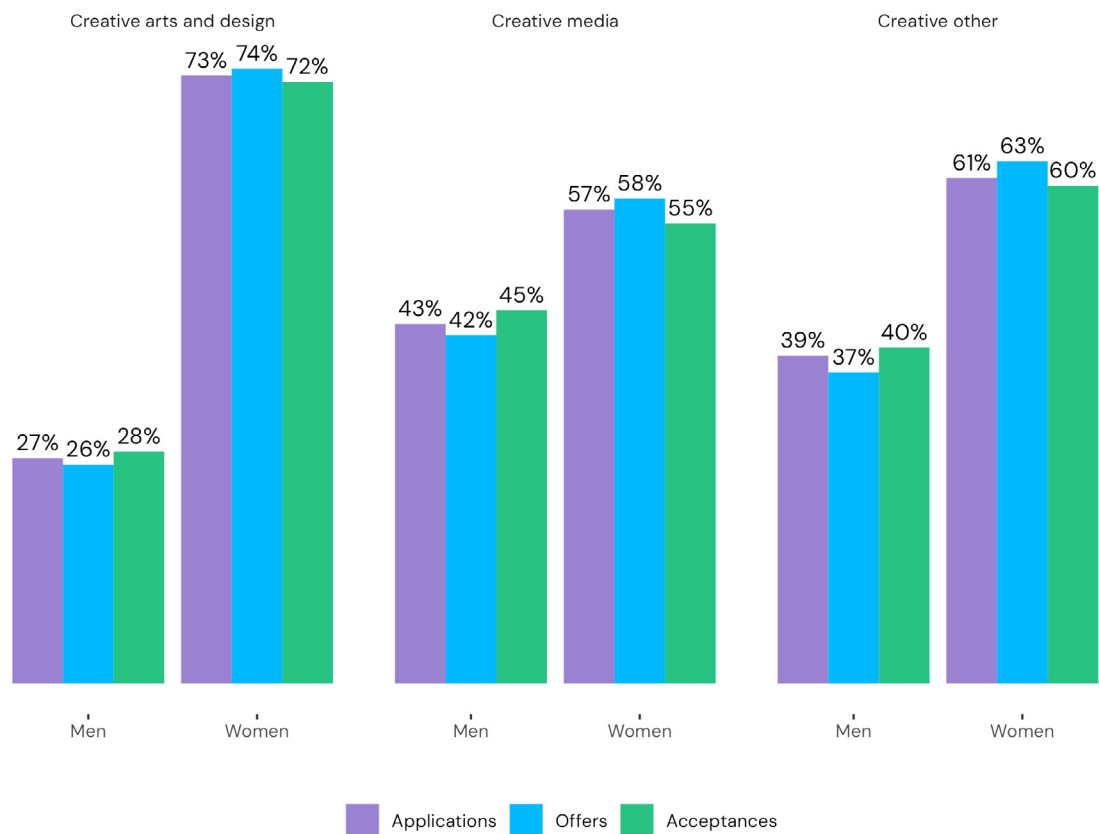
The over-representation of women is in keeping with the literature on creative HE, and it is also reflective of our analysis of HESA data in a subsequent part of the APPG’s research. Creative courses have similar patterns to the humanities in general, where women make up around two-thirds of applications, 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

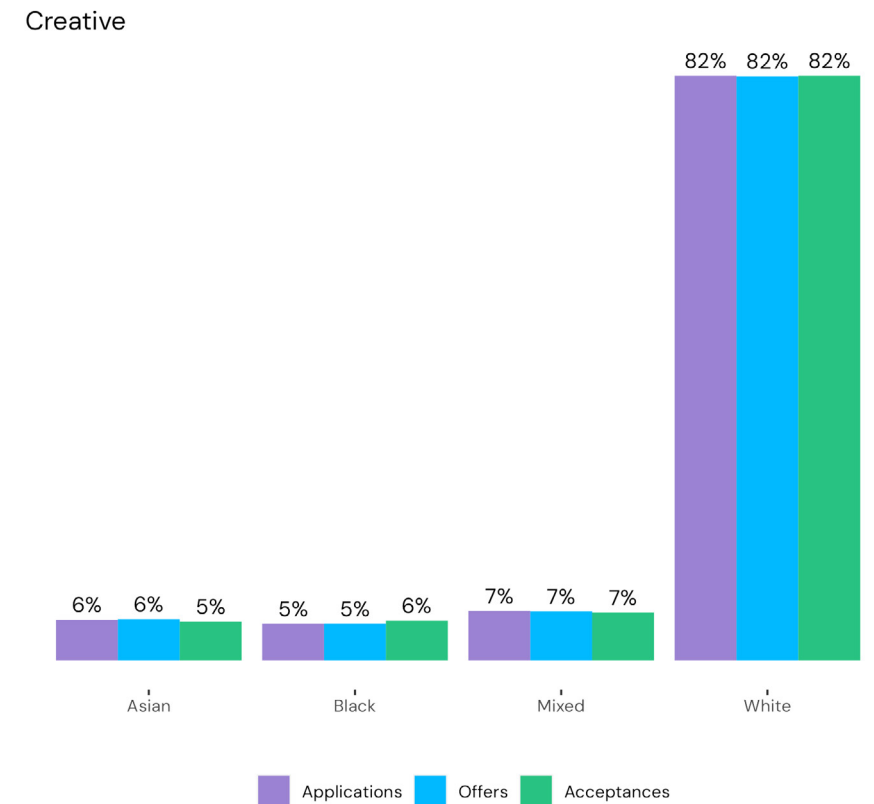


The gender differences in applications, offers and acceptances on subsectors of creative HE are especially important in the context of creative work. Although women are greater proportions of every type of creative course, this is not reflected in creative occupations or industries (Brook et al. 2020). 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

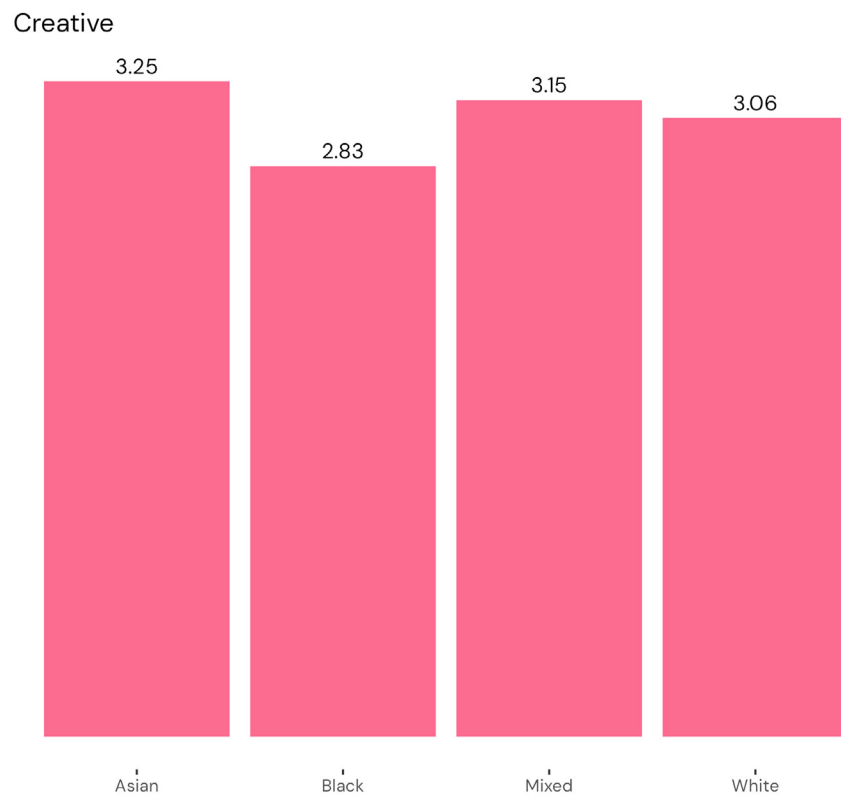


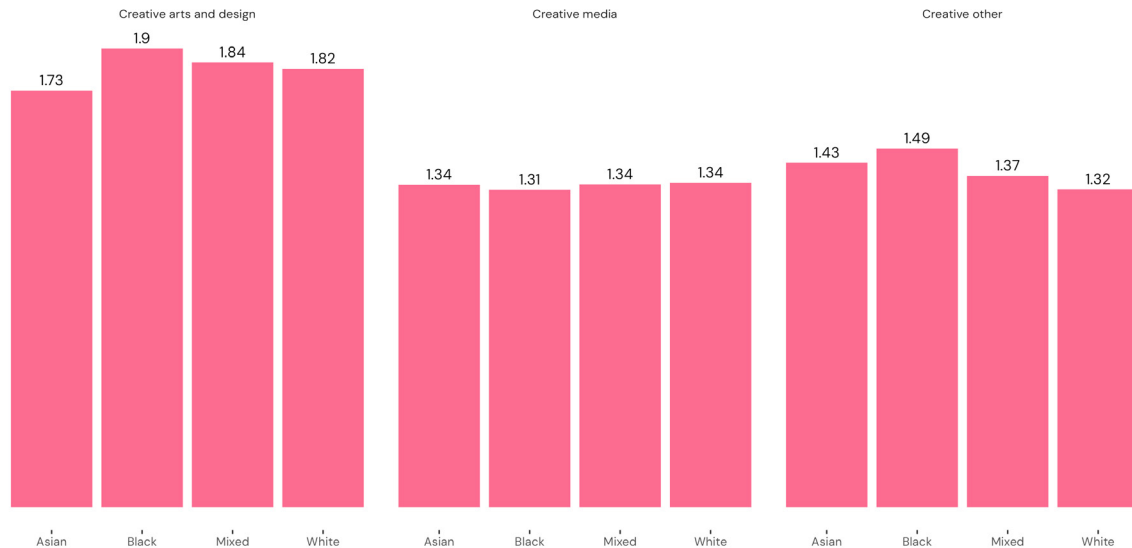
Figure 12: Ratio of offers to acceptances for creative courses in UCAS 2022 by ethnicity



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

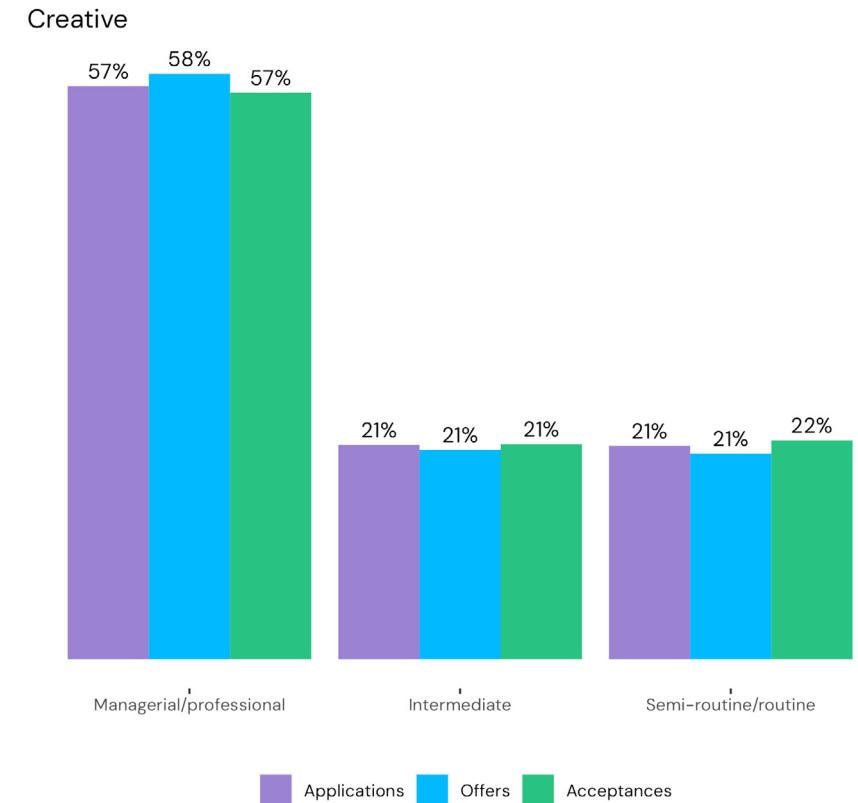


Class

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.

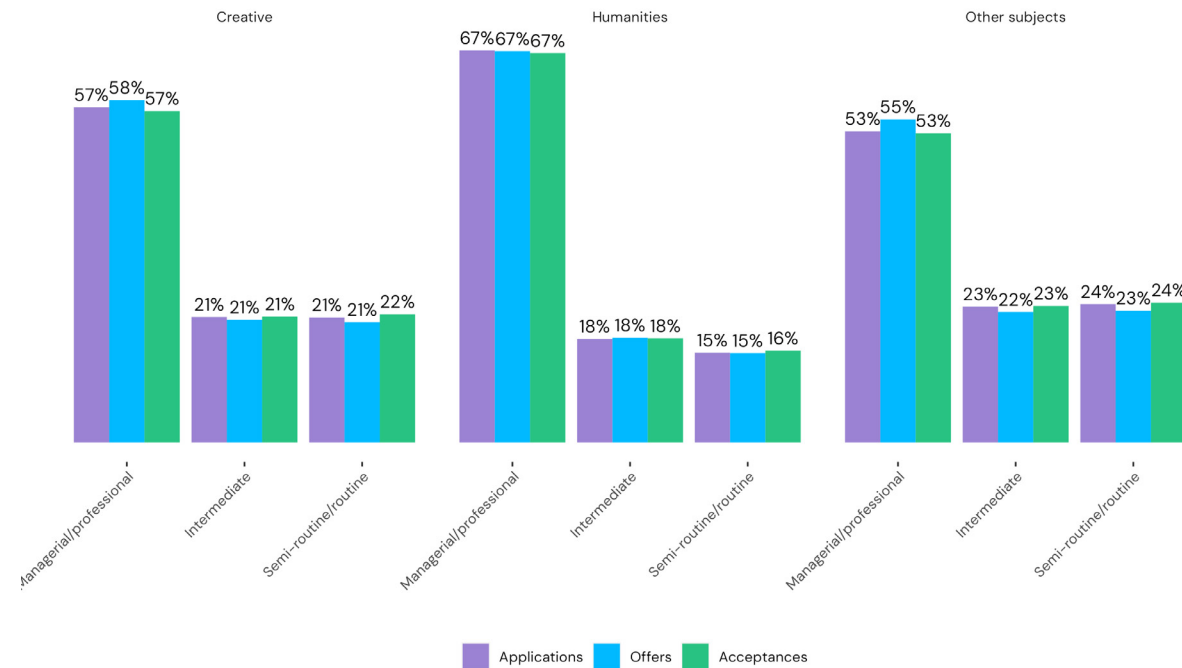
As with previous figures, those people who did not provide information on their parents' occupation are not analysed here. The online Appendix 2.1 also has more details on subsectors of creative courses, where there are less stark differences between creative arts and design, creative media and creative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

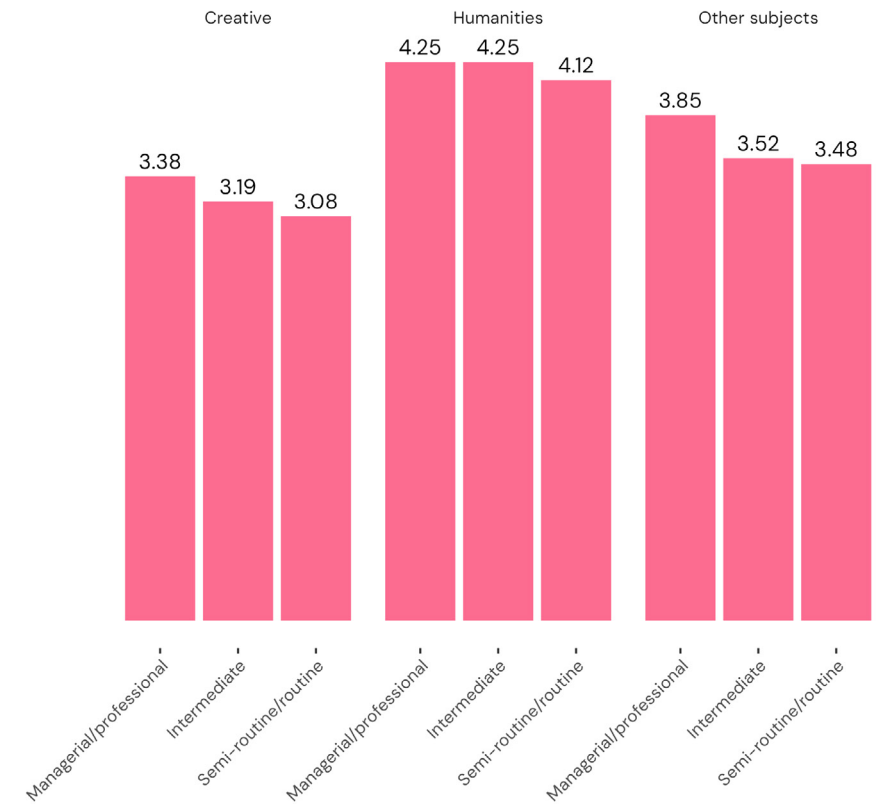
Figure 15: Applications, offers and acceptances for creative degrees, humanities degrees and other subjects in UCAS 2022 by social class



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

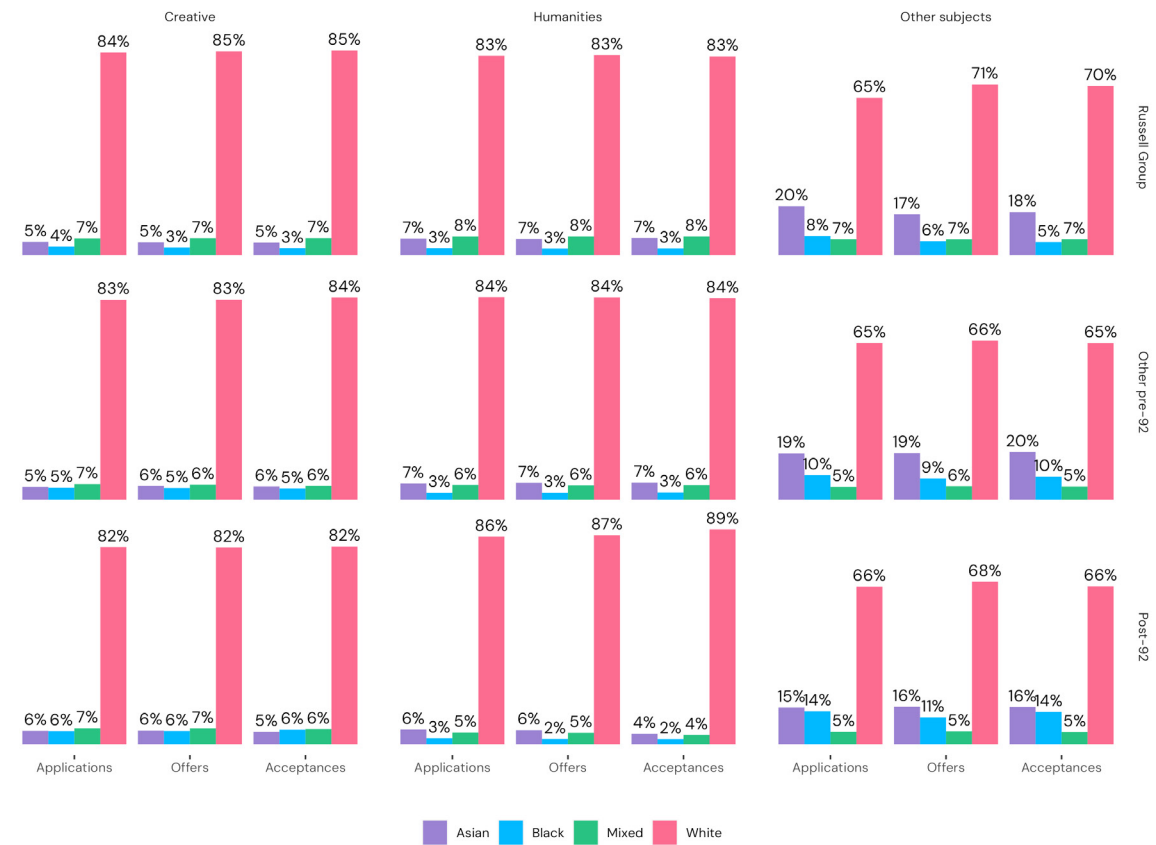
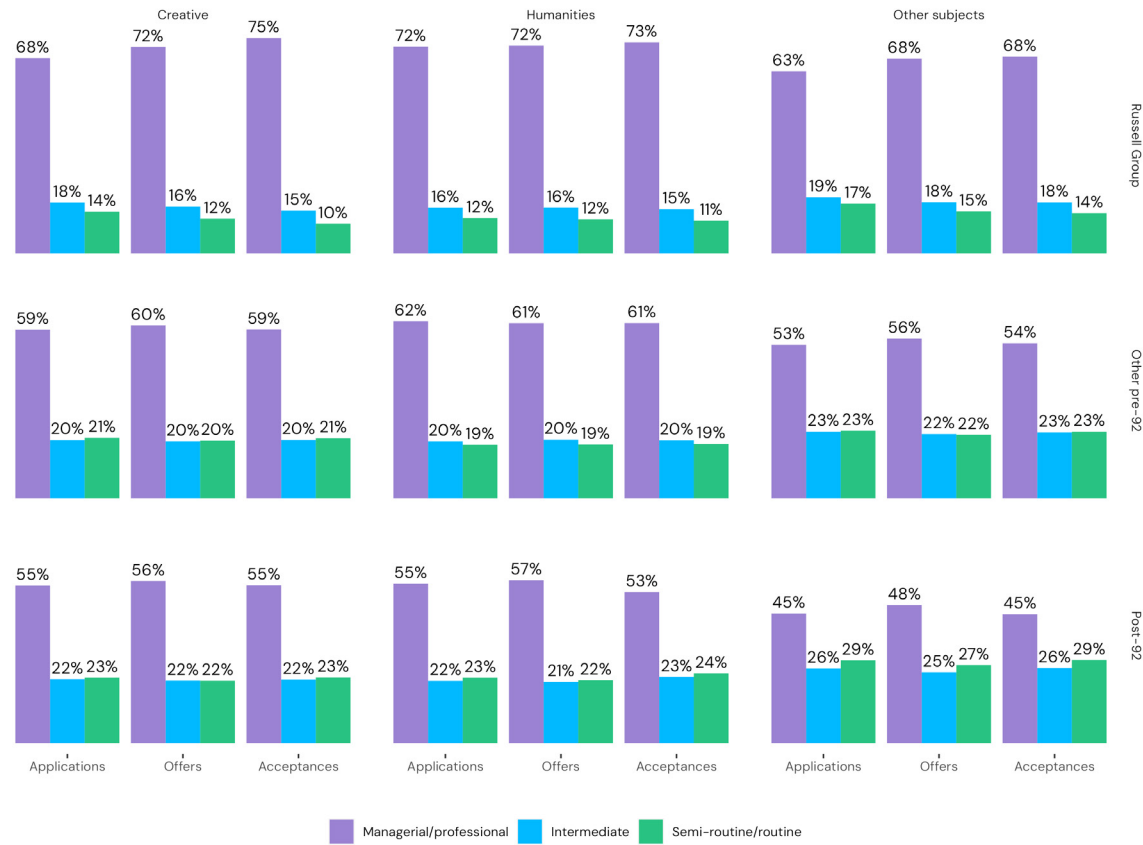


Figure 19: Applications, offers and acceptances for creative degrees, humanities degrees and other subjects in UCAS 2022 by class and type of university



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](#)



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.

CONTENTS

60	KEY FINDINGS
62	INTRODUCTION
64	DATASETS OVERVIEW
64	HESA STUDENT RECORDS
65	HESA'S DESTINATIONS OF LEAVERS FROM HIGHER EDUCATION (DLHE) SURVEY
66	ANALYSING HESA DATA
66	Diversity measures and HESA data
69A	Empirical specificationA
69	FINDINGS
69	Part 1: Diversity and trends over time
72	Gender
73	Ethnicity
74	Disability
74	Socio-economic status
75	Part 2: Diversity dynamics in the 2015-16 to 2016-17 cohorts
75	Who studies creative subjects?
77	What are the education outcomes of creative students in relation to their diversity?
78	What are the general employment outcomes of creative students in relation to their diversity?
79	Who goes into creative jobs?
80	CONCLUSION
82	REFERENCES
82	APPENDICES

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 scores¹.

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.

¹ 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 data² 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

² 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 2017³. 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.

³ 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:A

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	1) Higher managerial, administrative and professional occupations (1.1: Large employers and higher managerial and administrative occupations; 1.2: Higher professional occupations) 2) Lower managerial, administrative and professional occupations 3) Intermediate occupations
Medium SES	4) Small employers and own account workers 5) Lower supervisory and technical occupations 6) Semi-routine occupations
Low SES	7) Routine occupations 8) Never worked and long-term unemployed

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 A

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, γ represents cohort fixed effects and σ represents university/mission groups (Advani et al., 2020). ϵ is the unobservable factors.

FINDINGS

Part 1: Diversity and trends over time

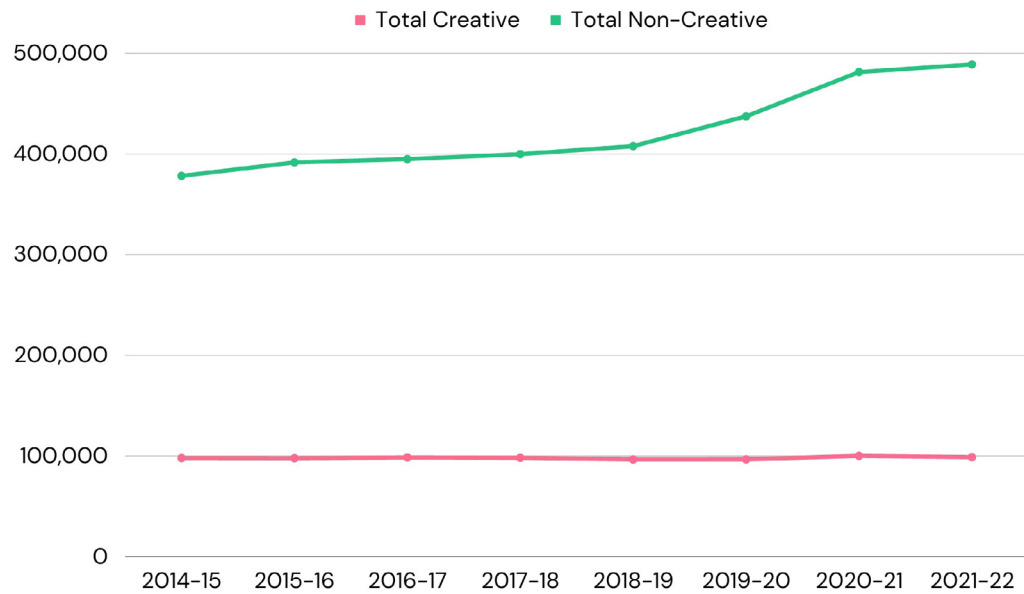
Here we discuss and focus on specific interesting aspects of the overall trends. The full list of each subject group is in Appendix 3.1.

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)

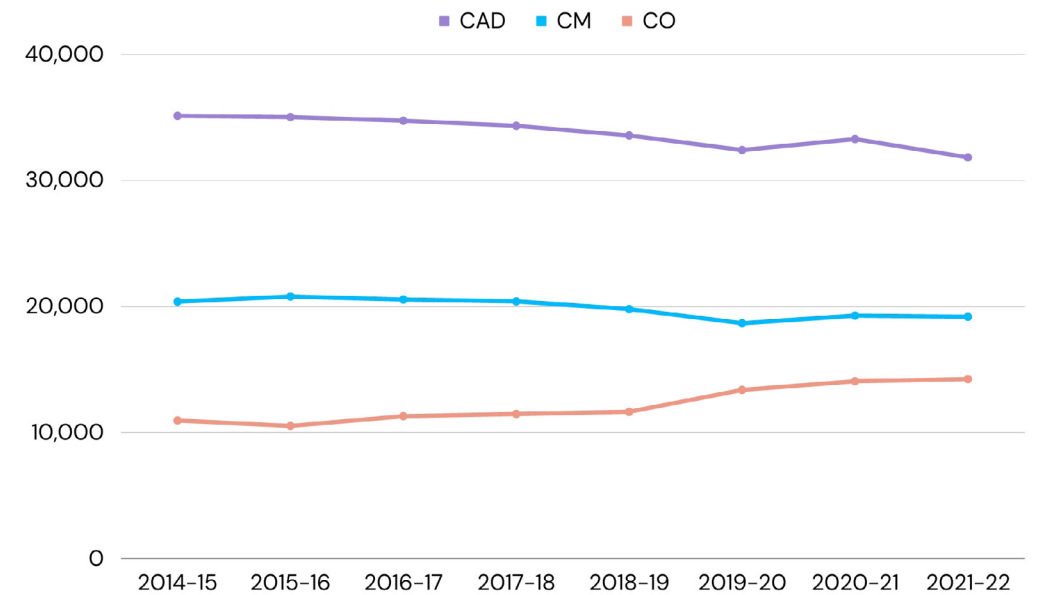


If we look more closely at creative subjects, we see an increase in students in the creative other (CO) category (6 per cent) but a slight decrease in the creative media (CM) group (2 per cent) and 4 per cent decrease in the creative arts and design group (CAD).

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)

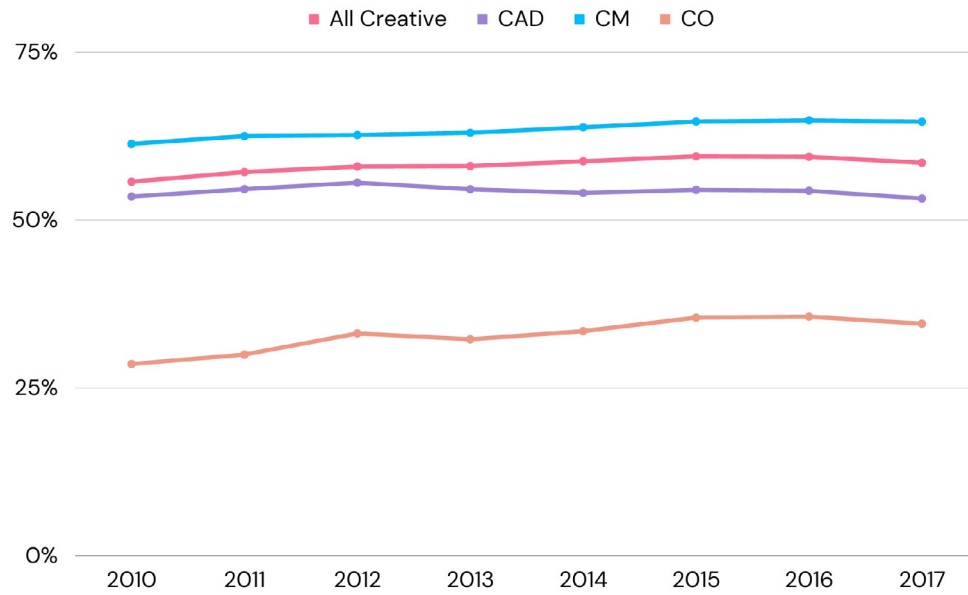


Below, we focus on some interesting trends emerging from the 2010-2017 HESA's Student Records, with more detailed charts included in Appendix 3.2.

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.

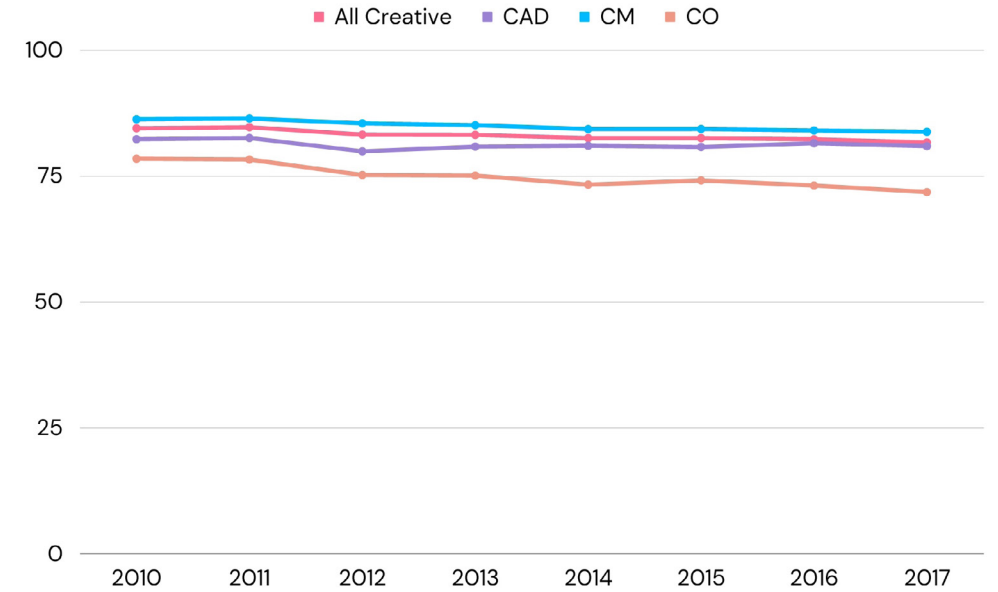
Figure 3: Proportion of female students over time (HESA's Student Records 2010–2017)



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.

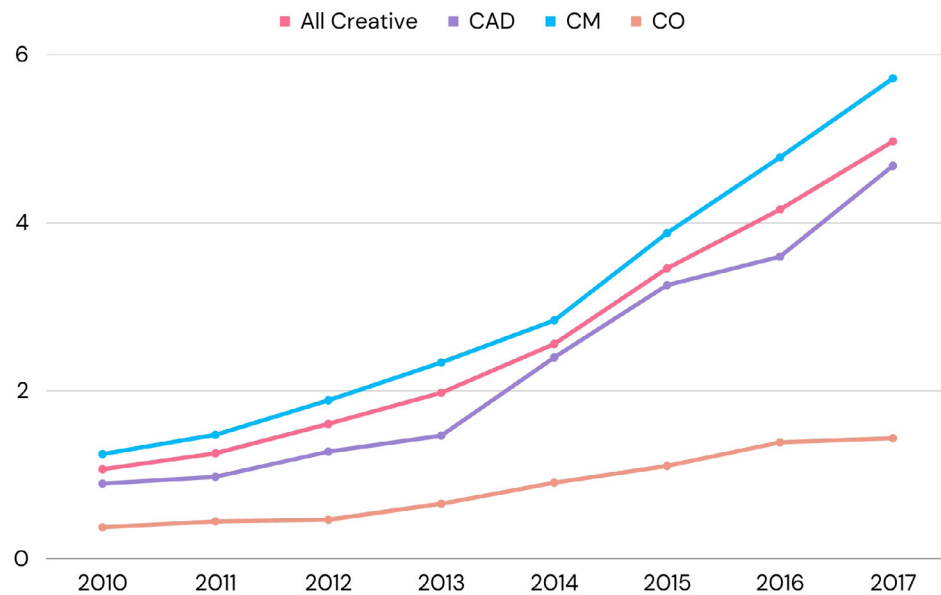
Figure 4: Proportion of White students over time (HESA's Student Records 2010–2017)



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.

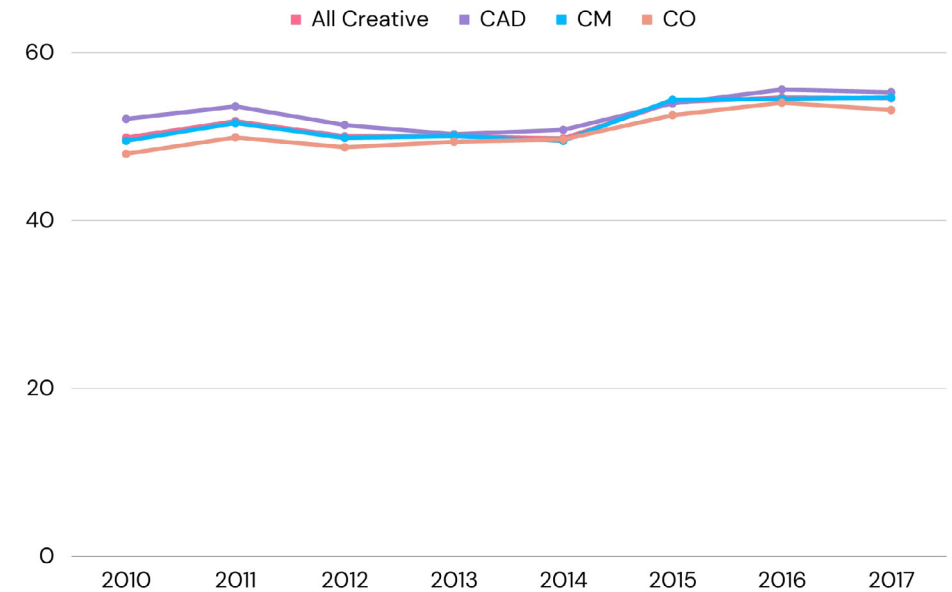
Figure 5: Proportion of students with a learning disability over time (HESA's Student Records 2010–2017)



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%
Ethnicity		
White	81.75%	89.02%
Black	6.18%	4.85%
Asian	10.81%	5.05%
Other	1.26%	1.08%
Disability		
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%
Socio-economic status		
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.

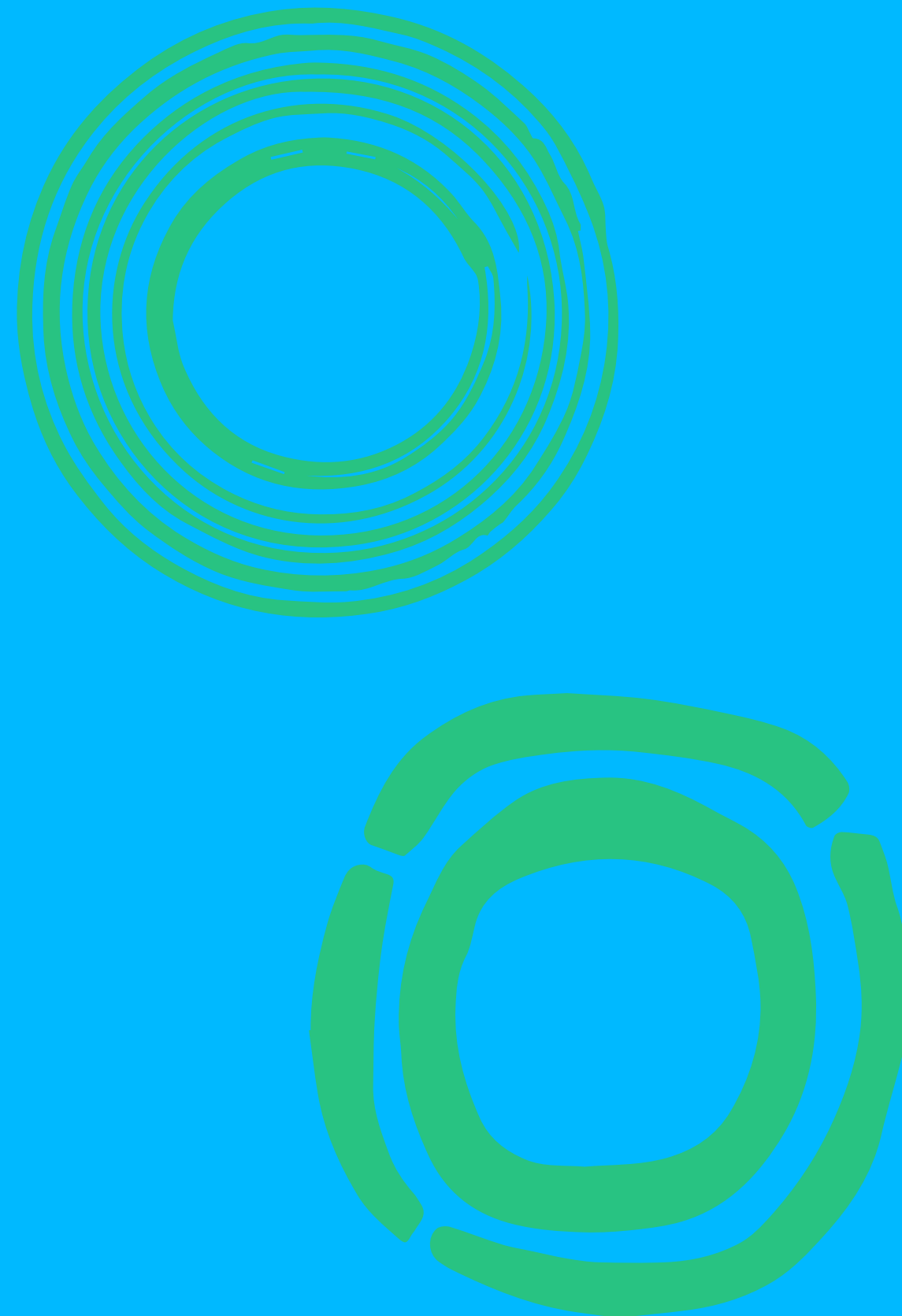
What this, and our other reports, demonstrates is the need to recognise the connections between inequality of access to creative HE and the inequality of recognition and reward in the creative and cultural job market. These inequalities speak to a significant challenge for creative HE to change its approach 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 \(HESA's Student Records and DLHE Survey, 2015–16 to 2016–17\)](#)



'What Works' to support equity, diversity and inclusion in creative higher education:

WIDENING PARTICIPATION

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POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS

Recommendations for government:

- This report urgently advises a revision of creative and cultural education provision. This includes primary and secondary education and local community cultural participation spending. We urge the Department for Education (DfE) to consider a widely adopted cultural education plan with targeted provision from the early years foundation stage (EYFS) to key stage 4.
- Effective widening participation requires engagement beyond higher education. A range of services, including secondary-level education, social care, including Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS) and creative economy employers are all important to widening participation. In addition to higher education's efforts, diversifying creative higher education is a societal and industry task.
- More clarity is needed on the decision-making process of young people deciding to apply to creative higher education. This will make interventions such as the Department for Culture, Media and Sport's (DCMS) Creative Careers programme more effective at reaching potential creative students and workers at the right points in their educational and working lives.
- Based on these points, this report recommends that DCMS and DfE co-convene a task force to build on the government's forthcoming review of creative education.

Recommendation for HEIs:

- Contextual admissions provide a useful intervention that acknowledges inequalities in the education system. They can be effective for widening participation in creative higher education and this report recommends HEIs and the Office for Students (OfS) develop a targeted widening participation framework for creative higher education.
- The current model for contextual admissions requires a reformed data regime to properly target those most in need. The literature suggests needs-based, rather than purely merit-based, interventions are most effective for widening participation.

- Following Boliver et al. (2022), we recommend a multi-stakeholder review, including HEIs, Office for Students, and DfE, of widening participation indicators. Effective practice can include higher education access to free school meal data and more direct recommendations from social workers, teachers and educators who can nominate individual students for widening participation intervention.
- HEIs need to offer more effective, targeted, support for both younger and mature students. When students reach higher education, there is evidence of several kinds of effective widening participation practice. However, specific targeting and tailoring interventions can be difficult. Moreover, this has not translated into creative higher education.
- Sharing effective widening participation practices for creative higher education is difficult because of data and research approach issues. We recommend Transforming Access and Student Outcomes in Higher Education (TASO) takes the lead in developing a specific set of guidance for creative education. Examples might include insights on the impact of audition fees and guidance on how to remove bias in entry criteria for creative courses. This is especially important for conservatoire and specialist creative higher education institutions.
- Financial support, peer and community activities, and individual targeted learning plans have been effective for other subjects. HEIs offering creative courses must work to translate these effective practices into the creative higher education context, to reflect students' strengths and enable their potential.
- Following the model established by the Athena SWAN Charter, we recommend HEIs develop a framework that recognises and rewards good practice in widening participation across higher and further education.

CONTENTS

88	OVERVIEW
90	METHODS
91	WIDENING PARTICIPATION – WHAT DOESN'T WORK
92	THE DEFICIT MODEL
94	FRAGMENTED DELIVERY AND THE NEED FOR MONITORING AND EVALUATION
96	THEME 1: IDENTIFYING WIDENING PARTICIPATION BENEFICIARIES AND EFFECTIVE ACCESS ROUTES TO HE
97	Identifying what counts as talent: creative access and contextual admissions
101	Case Study: Creative Shift, University of the Arts London
102	THEME 2: OUTREACH AND PARTNERSHIPS
104	Case Study: Accelerate: An Access to the Built Environment Professions Collaborative Programme
105	Case Study: Music Masters and Birmingham City University
107	THEME 3: BEYOND ACCESS – BELONGING AND PROGRESSION
110	Case Study: Arts Emergency
111	CONCLUSION
114	REFERENCES

OVERVIEW

The purpose of widening participation (WP) is to increase access to further (FE) and higher education (HE) so that tertiary level education is representative of the wider population. The WP agenda has been a key factor in HE policy rhetoric for decades. It was accelerated through changes made to the UK's tertiary education system, and increased focus on access, by the New Labour government. The introduction of the Teaching and Higher Education Act 1998 abolished student maintenance grants and introduced a new system of tuition fees and student loans (David, 2012; Mandler, 2020). In 1997/1998, only a minority of young people accessed HE, with significant under-representations across socio-economic status, geographical location, ethnicity and disability (Bolton, 2023).

A part of the multiple reforms to education made from 1998 was the requirement that higher education institutions (HEIs) commit to widening access for previously marginalised students (Heath et al., 2013). The Office for Fair Access (OFFA), established in 2004, required HEIs to specify their WP strategy to justify student fees. Each government since, irrespective of political party or Prime Minister, has supported HE expansion (Mandler, 2020).

Differences in HE policy and provision across the four nations have become more pronounced following the separation of powers (Bruce, 2012; Riddell et al., 2015; Donnelly and Evans, 2019). All devolved nations have different student fee regimes, with different models of WP.

In 2012, the cap on student tuition fees in England was raised to £9,000 per year for domestic students by the then Conservative and Liberal Democrat coalition government. Despite the fee increase, the number of applications to HE courses overall has continued to rise. However, notwithstanding enforced WP targets, there has been slow progress in increasing the number of students from marginalised backgrounds (Krstić et al., 2021; Boliver and Powell, 2023).

This is particularly pertinent to creative HE. Our papers analysing UCAS and HESA data demonstrated that HE is the most prominent pathway to employment within the creative economy. However, our review of the literature indicates critical issues with inclusive access to creative HE courses.

Inequalities of access to creative HE are an ongoing issue. In a 2011 analysis of WP policy in UK art schools, Burke and McManus (2011) concluded that admissions to arts courses were neither transparent nor fair; they reflected class-based and racial biases about both applicants and the quality of their submitted portfolio work; and that WP itself needed to shift its focus from individual to institutional change if creative courses were to successfully diversify their admissions.

Over a decade later, Broadhead (2022), writing on WP in arts HE, shared frustration at the lack of meaningful changes and continued in terms of student retention and degree completion (see also Caizley, 2020, on specialist music conservatoire admissions). More generally, HE has ongoing achievement gaps for underrepresented student groups (see TASO, 2023c and TASO, 2023b on ongoing disability and ethnicity achievement gaps).

This is a concerning legacy in the context of the exclusions and under-representations across the creative and cultural workforce, as addressed in the *Creative Majority* report (Wreyford et al., 2021). Contributing to this discussion is the backdrop of decreased value of creative arts-based subjects within the UK's state primary and secondary school education (Cultural Learning Alliance, 2021 and 2022). Ashton and Ashton (2022) compare the systematic devaluing and reduction of creative arts-based subjects in the publicly funded state education system in contrast to an increased investment in arts activities within private schools, which has led to a two-tier system of creative and cultural education provision (see also Bath et al., 2020, on music education).

It is not within the scope of this current paper to comment on curriculum reform at primary and secondary-level education, but **we strongly advise the UK government to reform its policy on creative arts-based learning within state education as a key functioning of the WP agenda of creative HE and the inclusive development of the future creative economy.**

Our analysis concurs with Rainford's (2017 and 2023) argument that WP should go "far beyond those departments tasked with access and outreach and has implications for staff across all academic and support service areas" (2017:45). This is a profound challenge, both for HE in general and for creative courses in particular.

The relationship between HE qualifications and career success is not straightforward. Ethnicity, gender, disability, social class and geography all restrict career success despite levels of qualifications for creative jobs (see Bull et al. (2022) on music and Martin and Frenette (2017) for US comparison).

Diversifying creative HE is only one part of the project for equity, diversity and inclusion in the creative economy, but it is an important one. Lack of diversity in creative HE has implications for the ongoing inequalities in the creative and cultural workforce. This is the starting point for the investigation into who participates within creative HE.

METHODS

As discussed in our introductory paper, this report applied a systematic literature review to the question of ‘What Works’ to widen participation in creative higher education. Search terms were inputted into the Scopus research database with results limited to journal articles published after 1998, the year of New Labour’s initial HE reforms. Unlike other topics addressed in this project, the results for WP yielded high results (see Table 1).

Table 1

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

The research team conducted an initial review of article abstracts from which relevant literature was divided into specified themes. Articles were grouped according to theme rather than discipline or geographical location. Different members of the research team then reviewed each theme, creating summary documents based on the ‘What Works’ framework.

This paper outlines three main areas of interest, drawn from the literature alongside written evidence submissions, roundtable consultation events and the existing creative industries research expertise of the project team.

First, we consider the impact of targeted access routes into creative HE through a review of the literature on identifying and measuring who is targeted and has access to a WP programme. Within this, we consider the impact of contextual offers. Second, we consider the literature on outreach programmes led by HE providers in partnership with other organisations. Finally, we consider the question of belonging and issues related to social and cultural norms associated with HE. These unwritten norms of HE can act as a barrier to the WP agenda. This is in terms of retention within HE, degree completion and progression into the workplace.

Within each section, we provide case studies that represent good practice and can be scaled up for further impact. We start the report with a summary of what doesn’t work in relation to the WP agenda with a reflection on how certain barriers are pertinent to creative HE courses.

WIDENING PARTICIPATION – WHAT DOESN’T WORK

The WP agenda has been in operation within the UK’s HE sector for decades. There have been multiple changes within HE policy since the introduction of the student loan system and tuition fees in 1998 and increases to the tuition fee cap in 2012 and 2017. Following 16 years of government-mandated effort to widen participation across all HEIs, limited progress has been made in real measurable terms (Henley and Barton, 2022; Zacharias and Mitchell, 2020; Dean, 2011).

Defining beneficiaries for WP interventions is challenging. **In the UK, there has been a substantial amount of activity in pursuit of WP, but there is also a lack of systematic evaluation**

or evidence of the effectiveness of these activities (Younger et al., 2019).

As a result, the project of WP, according to Boliver and Powell's (2023) recent summary, has made very slow progress in the most selective English universities. Much activity, as evidenced by the access agreements submitted to what was OFFA and is now the Office for Students (OfS), focused on defending entry requirements and raising the aspirations of those from marginalised groups that might meet them.

THE DEFICIT MODEL

The focus on 'raising aspirations' in the WP agenda has been extensively criticised (Rainford, 2023). A variety of disciplines, methodologies and research philosophies concurred that programmes designed on the basis that WP needs to correct student deficits do not work (McLellan et al., 2016; Breeze et al., 2020; Banerjee, 2018; Harrison and Waller, 2017).

A deficit model places the responsibility for exclusions on those who are excluded. Lack of uptake or participation is reframed as an active choice not to engage, rather than an acknowledgement of the multiple barriers and structural inequalities that create exclusion.

Dawson (2019) provides a useful illustration of the deficit model in practice based on her research into exclusion from everyday science learning. Dawson undertook research with a series of grassroots community-based groups based across London to examine their exclusion from publicly funded science-based institutions, including museums and galleries. The work unpacks the multiple, systemic, intersectional practices that operate to both exclude certain groups from participation and create a false narrative that such exclusion was an active choice not to participate.

The deficit model homogenises students (Thompson, 2017), rather than acknowledging or addressing the intersectional complexity of their individual lives. For example, Madriaga (2022) argues WP policy has been overly focused on proxies for class, ignoring issues of structural racism in education.

There has also been a failure to account for targeted marginalised groups such as care-experienced young people.

This is a group that cuts across socio-economic, gender, racial, geographical and disability characteristics and remains critically underrepresented across HE (TASO, 2021a, 2021b and 2021c; see also Baker et al., 2022).

Evans et al. (2017) suggest the discourse of 'raising aspirations' allows HEIs to believe that it is only the students' own ambition and awareness that prevents high-achieving young people from applying (Stone et al., 2022). Sociology of education literature is highly critical of the idea that children have low aspirations (Baker et al., 2014; Canovan and Walsh, 2020; Campbell and McKendrick, 2017). As St Clair et al. (2013: 719) note, **"Aspirations, even in these communities struggling with poverty, are very high – the missing element is the knowledge of how to make these aspirations concrete and obtainable."**

One main criticism of both the raising aspirations and deficit model is that it removes responsibility from HE to have internal reflections and make structural changes (Evans et al., 2017; Lambrechts, 2020; Thomas et al., 2021). Without effective monitoring and evaluation frameworks, many of the WP interventions have been folded into institutional marketing, which enables HEIs to maintain an illusion of meritocracy in their entry requirements (Evans et al., 2017; Boliver and Powell, 2023). TASO's (2023d) evidence toolkit website suggests "there is no evidence demonstrating a causal link between [these] activities and [WP] outcomes".A

Overall, much of the rationale that frames the WP agenda is based on concepts of individuals adapting to the system. This is instead of HE developing systematic and targeted outreach programmes designed in partnership with multiple agencies and stakeholders.

Boliver and Powell's (2023) review of HEI WP policy commitments suggest a recent shift away from deficit-based approaches. Increasing levels of support and resources can be found for specific underrepresented demographics. The OfS, for example, offers briefings and guidance for several underrepresented groups on its website. However, as TASO's evidence toolkit suggests, we are far from a consensus on effective practice being settled.

FRAGMENTED DELIVERY AND THE NEED FOR MONITORING AND EVALUATION

A second criticism of the WP agenda is its uneven and patchy delivery around the country (Davies and Donnelly, 2023; see also Davies, 2023). The 2017 Higher Education and Research Act and the creation of the OfS set out a series of conditions for HEIs as a registration requirement (OfS, 2023). Conditions A1 and A2 require that providers have in force an access and participation plan approved by the OfS. Providers must take all 'reasonable steps' to comply with the provisions of the plan. They are also required to publish their access and participation statement and update and republish this statement on an annual basis.

However, no clear model of WP has been suggested.

Individual institutions have been left to self-define and manage their WP strategy. There have been attempts to create a coherent approach. The National Collaborative Outreach Programme (NCOP) launched in January 2017 and ran until 2021. It had the purpose of delivering a 'sustained, progressive and intensive programme of support' to pupils in years 9 to 13 living in areas with low levels of HE participation and where participation was lower than expected given GCSE attainment (Bowes et al., 2019).

There is insufficient data on the impact of the NCOP programme to get a 'What Works' assessment of increased access to and retention within HE for targeted stakeholders. Overall, the lack of a clear and consistent approach to targeting WP beneficiaries, and effective interventions, has resulted in multiple interpretations of the WP requirements and patchy delivery.

Underpinning these issues is the question of how to define, target and engage beneficiaries and what constitutes effective pathways into HE. There have been multiple interventions, and our search of the literature on WP yielded high numbers of results.

This is a global agenda, reflecting the trend for multiple national HE systems to want more diversity. The literature search produced case studies that reported on schemes and activities with findings based on staff and student reflections – for example, Ashworth et al.'s (2010) ethnographic study on disabled students' access to, and experience of, a creative arts module and McNeill's (2021) action-research project on a British art school WP programme. Formal evaluations are less prominent, and thus sifting and distilling 'What Works' for WP in creative education is a complex task.

The wider scholarly literature on WP impact identifies a tension between the desire for inclusiveness and the traditionally competitive criteria used for entry to HE, particularly in the context of those applying to vocational educational routes such as medicine and architecture (Farini and Scollan, 2021; Curtis et al., 2015; Boliver and Powell, 2021).

This is a particular issue for conservatoires, where entry requirements are often dependent on students having access to expensive lessons and instruments very early in life, long before they reach the point of auditions for entry. **HEIs are thus placed in the difficult position of balancing entry requirements with openness and inclusivity, against a backdrop of structural inequalities within secondary education** (Ashton and Ashton, 2022).

There are parallels here with our paper on apprenticeships. The ongoing issues of parity of esteem for different varieties of qualifications reflect an ongoing lack of institutional and organisational change to be more open and inclusive. The emphasis is still, ultimately, on changing individuals to fit institutions, rather than transforming the institutions themselves (Thomas et al., 2021; Kettley and Murphy, 2021).

There remains little concrete understanding of how specific initiatives have functioned to improve diversity over time. There is no standardised method of data collection or interpretation to solidly inform researchers seeking to understand 'What Works' in terms of widening participation in HE (e.g., Younger et al., 2019; Baines et al., 2022). TASO's evidence toolkit (TASO, 2023) is also an excellent resource on this issue.

Inconsistent practices make it difficult to compare progress between institutions. Even official data from the four nations is difficult to compare due to the differing HEI landscapes and modes of delivery in each country (Donnelly and Evans, 2019; Riddell, 2015).

A recent review of published research examining the impact of WP outreach across the UK identified only 26 papers for analysis (Heaslip et al., 2020). The paper's authors concluded that, with such little systematic evidence, it would be impossible to draw concrete conclusions as to whether outreach has had an objective impact on the structural factors that shape access to HE.

The uneven geography of WP infrastructure is an important reminder of the structural inequalities underpinning HE. As much as there are valuable 'What Works' insights in the literature, the focus must be on institutional change. McLellan et al. (2016: 60), in their account of setting up a WP programme at the University of Bristol, pose an apt question, asking how the university "would have to change in order to admit these [WP] students and provide them with a fulfilling and nurturing intellectual environment in which to engage fully with undergraduate study".

THEME 1: IDENTIFYING WIDENING PARTICIPATION BENEFICIARIES AND EFFECTIVE ACCESS ROUTES TO HE

There is very little reliable data and evidence on WP in relation to creative HE subjects. As HE institutions are each responsible for their own WP activities, creative courses have little empirical evidence on which to base their WP strategies. One limitation is that the impactful practices evidenced (e.g., Jackson and Price, 2019; McTernan, 2020; McNeill, 2021) can be difficult to scale and lack clarity on the drivers and mechanisms underpinning change.

TASO's (2023) WP evidence toolkit assesses 22 areas of WP practice. Three areas are specifically focused on WP for disabled students. Another 17 are more general, including aspiration raising, financial support, foundation years, mentoring and associated support such as role models and pre-entry tutoring. The remaining two – teaching employability skills and work experience – are covered in our subsequent paper on work-integrated learning (WIL). The rest of the current paper covers TASO's 20 areas with an additional focus on creative HE. TASO notes that across all the areas it has assessed, there is a need for more reliable data and better evidence.

Identifying inequalities and potential beneficiaries is dependent on quality data. What counts has generated significant debate.

The Scottish Government's Commission on Widening Access uses the Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation (SIMD) to identify potential students from the most deprived backgrounds. Hardie and Olivier (2022) describe this area-based measure as "a very blunt tool" that "cannot distinguish between deprived and

non-deprived individuals living in areas classified as low/high deprivation". Scotland's outgoing Commissioner for Fair Access recently called for the introduction of a basket of measures rather than SIMD targets to give a better picture of each institution's progress towards WP.

The situation in Scotland's remote regions is indicative of the broader issue of how locales of disadvantage are identified by HEIs across the UK. Similarly to SIMD, participation of local areas (POLAR) data and, more recently, tracking underrepresentation by area (TUNDRA) are used by the OfS to identify areas of relative socio-economic disadvantage and low university admission rates (Boliver et al., 2022).

Universities have relied on this data to select schools to work with as part of outreach programmes and also to filter and contextualise admissions (Mountford-Zimdars et al., 2021). Due to the high level of social mix in some areas (notably so in London boroughs), POLAR and TUNDRA have been criticised as measures of socio-economic disadvantage, delivering too great a number of false positives (students identified as disadvantaged when they are not) and false negatives (disadvantaged students deemed not so and thus wrongly excluded from WP initiatives) (Atherton et al., 2019; Boliver et al., 2022).

Whether an applicant was in receipt of free school meals (FSM) is an individual measure of socio-economic disadvantage that delivers greater accuracy, reducing the number of false positives significantly and the number of false negatives to a more tolerable degree (Boliver et al., 2022a). Unfortunately, FSM data, used extensively by schools, has not been readily available to university administrators (Mountford-Zimdars et al., 2021). In terms of 'What Works', we recommend that FSM data is available to universities as part of a selection of measures.

Identifying what counts as talent: creative access and contextual admissions

While debates over data frameworks and targeting of interventions can seem quite technical, the philosophical question of what counts as merit and talent is also acute in the context of creative HE. Auditions or portfolio-based entry requirements reflect a different set of issues compared with WP in the context of A-level grades and the pathway into HE and, as discussed below, present

particular cost barriers for disadvantaged students.

The idea of inherent 'giftedness' has been found to actively obscure the cultural barriers to creative HE faced by WP students (Bhagat and O'Neill, 2011). It also reflects debates over the way talent is constructed and the negative associations placed on particular demographic groups as identified in the Burke and McManus (2011) study. They found a racialised devaluing of certain forms of creative interests, including liking hip hop music and certain fashion brands. This contributed to exclusionary recruitment practices that favoured classed concepts of taste over academic qualifications.

These issues are, of course, not limited to the creative industries. Yet, as *Creative Majority* demonstrated, the emphasis on the idea of talent and creativity in the context of closed hiring practices ends up excluding those who do not fit a white, male, middle-class and able-bodied norm (Wreyford et al., 2021 see also Brook et al., 2020).

Research that examines admissions processes across HE also reflects this problem. The application process can be difficult to navigate (Hayton et al., 2015). Admissions processes have, until recently, remained largely unchanged in the way they select candidates from the applications pool (McManus, 2006; Heaslip et al., 2020; Crockford, 2020).

Creating admission procedures that recognise diversity is controversial (Boliver et al., 2022a; Boliver and Powell, 2023). Bravenboer (2011) describes a "dynamic tension" between notions of "merit and potential" and fairness in university applications. Farini and Scollan (2021) suggest changes in the orientation of what counts as quality in admissions are needed, an idea underpinning much of the literature. There are some examples of taking applicants' context into account from creative HE.

Challenging the norms and assumptions of creative talent has been a key component of a successful WP strategy at Goldsmiths, University of London (Hayton et al., 2015). It guarantees an interview for all applicants from Lewisham, has adopted reflexive practices for admissions staff, including a workshop on biases in the admissions process, and ran a two-week pre-admissions summer school.

The Liverpool Institute for Performing Arts (LIPA) reconfigured the idea of 'talent', as part of a broader WP programme. In particular, LIPA helped admissions staff understand the barriers

for WP students and worked to raise awareness that there is no compromise on quality for WP participants (Gammo-Felton, 2011).

The UK's HE conservatoires across music, dance and drama present a significant barrier to diversity within creative HE. UCAS reports demonstrate the majority of conservatoires are made up of privately educated students from the most advantaged backgrounds (see data in UCAS Conservatoires, 2015, 2016, 2017 and 2018), with serious under-representation of those from racialised minority backgrounds (HESA, 2023).

One positive change has been over funding for auditions. Prior to 2019, UK conservatoires offered very little (if any) financial assistance with audition fees and travel expenses. Since 2019, more financial support has become available. On the UCAS Conservatoires (2022) application help page, students who are struggling to pay audition fees are directed to the individual conservatoires for help and further assistance.

In 2019, the Leeds Conservatoire became the first UK conservatoire to abolish audition fees and offers refunds for travel expenses of those applicants from low-income households (Leeds Conservatoire, 2019). In more recent years (from 2019 onwards), audition fee waivers have since become embedded across all UK conservatoires' WP and access policies.

UCAS Conservatoires (2022) also signposts students needing financial help to the charitable organisation *Open Door*¹, but this is not available for those seeking to pursue music at a conservatoire, as it offers financial help only to drama students.

However, signposting alone is not enough to make real progress on WP. Another cost is consultation lessons. Highlighted by Trinity Laban Conservatoire of Music and Dance (TLCMD) in its auditions and application advice, "a consultation lesson is a one-on-one discussion between a prospective student and professor to assess suitability for conservatoire education" (TLCMD, 2023). The current fee for a consultation lesson at TLCMD is £72, with slightly higher charges of £90 payable to professors at the Royal College of Music (RCM, 2023). At present, none of the conservatoires in the UK offer a consultation fee waiver, a significant concern given its potential impact on aspiring musicians from lower socio-economic backgrounds.

¹ Open Door is an organisation that helps talented young people who do not have the financial support or resources to gain a place at one of the UK's leading drama schools. See <https://www.opendoor.org.uk/>

Looking at the more general context of diversity in music HE, Bull et al. (2022) found some evidence of positive impacts of contextual admissions for music undergraduates, with programme support from admissions staff. While the current model of contextual admissions is a relatively recent phenomenon (Mountford-Zimdars et al., 2016), they note that sharing of good practice, particularly for performance- and portfolio-based admissions systems, has huge potential for the sector.

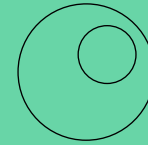
In the literature we have reviewed, contextual admissions in creative HE are under-represented in the research. This reflects the ongoing lack of sector-wide monitoring and evaluation. There is, therefore, a rich opportunity in the context of performance or portfolio-based admissions for institutions to open up discussions of their criteria, which can be published and shared with relevant stakeholders, including potential applications, for increased transparency (Banerjee, 2018).

Mountford-Zimdars and Moore (2020), writing in the context of general WP policy, note that there is no single shared approach to contextual admissions across the sector and no consistency in the data and its use. Contextualising admissions requires additional considerations and responsibilities on the part of the institution (Boliver et al., 2022a; Mountford-Zimdars et al., 2021). They alone are not sufficient to provide significant institutional change with regards to WP (Budd, 2017).

Broader WP programmes (for example, access courses) use an element of contextual admissions (Barkat, 2019; Curtis and Smith, 2020) or are dependent on them when programmes finish. To ensure continuation and attainment or 'staying in', it is imperative that contextualised admissions are accompanied by a network of support and mentoring made visible and accessible to all applicants throughout their university experience (Boliver and Powell, 2021; Milburn, 2012). Without this whole institution approach, contextual admissions run the risk of creating negative experiences for WP students, which can lead to them leaving courses (Hagger et al., 2011; Dynarski, 2021).

Overall, WP for creative HE is not just about lowering grades and flagging applicants based on their backgrounds (i.e., through contextual admissions). As we have seen, there are a range of social inequalities influencing the WP practice of specialist institutions. The standard needed to access specialist conservatoires involves many years of training (whether this be

in music, dance or drama). As a result, those institutions who are committed to achieving their WP targets should also ensure their WP programmes reach younger children and their families.



CASE STUDY: CREATIVE SHIFT, UNIVERSITY OF THE ARTS LONDON

University of the Arts London (UAL)'s *Creative Shift* programme provides students from underrepresented groups with opportunities to develop their networks, working relationships and professional practice in the creative industries. This is achieved through working collaboratively with industry partners on live briefs, masterclasses, community networking groups, internships and talks.

It has a strong record of success. One student told the evaluation, *"I felt like I didn't belong at first because my peers on my course were not supportive and quite intimidating. Since joining Creative Shift, I found tranquillity in meeting like-minded creatives. I was also able to improve my skills through projects that reminded me of my ability and worth – that I deserved to be a student as much as anybody."*

Since 2019, *Creative Shift* has worked with an average of 400 students each academic year. Key industry partners include LinkedIn, Soho House, Eric, NOW, venturethree, Creative Access, Code First Girls, Hope & Glory, Depop, GUAP and Flannels.

Creative Shift takes a targeted approach, supporting students least represented in the creative sector to access and progress within the creative industries. This commitment is written in UAL's Access and Participation Plan. It also forms part of UAL's Anti-Racism Action Plan, which states the need to increase the visibility of racially minoritised student communities and people.

Retention and attainment data highlights a positive impact on reducing gaps for marginalised students who engage in *Creative Shift* activity. Retention rates for students participating in *Creative Shift* activities are 4 per cent higher than the overall rate at UAL in 2021-22. Attainment rates for *Creative Shift* students were 10% higher than the overall rate at UAL for 21/22.

The programme is led by students' interests and places emphasis on their strengths alongside what they need to thrive

in industry. The design and tailoring of programme activities are done with students' schedules and personal circumstances in mind to ensure that student-centred spaces are created.

Feeding into the wider remit of the academic enhancement team's curriculum work, *Creative Shift* aims to foster belonging and community through compassionate pedagogies. It is inspired by the West African philosophy ubuntu and the 'I am because we are' ideology, which is used as a model to support decolonial approaches to education. Students and staff are encouraged to value themselves and each other with compassion, empathy and support to encourage students to affect positive change in their respective communities and become change agents of the future.

Another student told the evaluation: *"I think Creative Shift gave me a wider idea of what working in a creative industry would feel like. By working with other students from different UAL colleges, it made me feel a sense of belonging. Even though others study different courses, I still felt as if I was part of the same community that we all settled into through ideas and different perspectives."*

THEME 2: OUTREACH AND PARTNERSHIPS

A common intervention referred to across the WP literature is an outreach programme. Outreach consists of multiple strategies implemented at university or college level. These include school visits, summer school programmes, outreach partnerships with industry, online learning and mentoring.

The dissemination of outreach programmes varies according to institution, and there is not enough comparative monitoring or evaluation by which to benchmark and reflect on impact. There is also a geographical and regional bias.

WP is *itself* unevenly distributed around the country (Davies and Donnelly, 2023; Davies, 2023). London has a strong WP ecosystem and exactly the sorts of partnerships and infrastructure needed to deliver effective WP, as evidenced by data on university entry from London applicants. Outside of the capital, schools lack those same resources and partnerships. For prospective students in disadvantaged areas at a distance from creative institutions, for example in rural areas, opportunities

presented by outreach initiatives are limited (Lasselle and Johnson, 2021; see also Davies and Donnelly, 2023, and Davies, 2023, on regional inequalities in WP). Another route to engaging potential students not in an institution's immediate locale is through summer schools. The application process can, however, favour a self-selecting cohort of applicants who already have tacit knowledge and skills (TASO, 2021; IntoUniversity, 2022). The propensity to favour students already more inclined or able to find pathways to university may also compromise any understanding of an initiative's impact.

One common positive theme that spanned across the 'What Works' focus on creative education was the benefit of effective partnerships with industry. Relevant examples of effective partnerships are included as case studies throughout each research theme, including WIL and apprenticeships. For WP, partnerships between HEIs and industry-based creative and cultural organisations have enabled a collaborative outreach model that includes multiple stakeholders and agencies. This approach enables a wider reach for WP initiatives, including identifying beneficiaries.

The two WP examples we highlight as good practice are city-based (London and Birmingham). While we celebrate the impact of these particular schemes, the regional inequalities should be acknowledged.

Accelerate is an access and development scheme for young people into subjects linked to the built environment, including architecture, design and urban planning, managed by the charity Open City. It has partnerships with University College London, University of the Arts London and Kingston University. The partnership connects the agenda of making London more open and accountable to young people. Alongside making the built environment sector more diverse and equitable, participants discuss their own city and their role within it with the contributing HEIs and industry partners.

The music education charity Music Masters started as an immersive music education programme for primary schools. As its students have grown through secondary education and into HE, it has observed the need to expand its expertise to foster accessible pathways into music education. It has also identified a need to create inclusive-focused music educators, leading to a specialised HE programme in partnership with Birmingham City

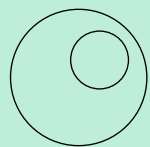
University (see case study on p105).

In both cases, the partnership is between a HEI and a charitable organisation linked to issues of equitable access and illustrates the barriers to inclusion within a particular sector of the creative economy. The charitable organisation creates a bridge between the HE provider, the student beneficiaries and the industry.

There are key learnings for fostering equitable partnerships with external organisations in the case of creative education for both WP and WIL, as discussed in our paper on that subject. The collaborative nature and opportunities that each side brings adds value to the objectives of the programme.

Efforts since the pandemic to bring more outreach and learning activities online may also be a useful way to reach remote students as well as those with disabilities, financial constraints or caring responsibilities. The balance between in-person and online learning must be maintained if initiatives are to have a meaningful and sustainable impact (Dodd et al., 2021; Pickering and Donnelly, 2022). Issues of regional disparity of opportunity must still, therefore, be addressed.

This is because recent research (TASO, 2023) finds limited causal evidence on 'What Works' to address disability inequality via online approaches. In addition, online or mass learning strategies can be at odds with calls to contextualise outreach for specific communities. The risk is they offer a top-down transfer of information, rather than extending real partnerships and relationships (Formby et al., 2020).



CASE STUDY: ACCELERATE: AN ACCESS TO THE BUILT ENVIRONMENT PROFESSIONS COLLABORATIVE PROGRAMME

Accelerate is a design and mentoring outreach programme run by the charity Open City in partnership with The Bartlett School of Architecture, University College London; Central Saint Martins, University of the Arts London; Kingston University; and the Architectural Association School of Architecture. It aims to support young people (16–18) from underrepresented backgrounds to pursue careers in the built environment industries

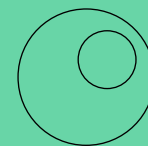
by equipping them with the skills, portfolios, networks and confidence to make informed career choices.

Accelerate is funded entirely by external grants and sponsorship. The programme is structured around 10 skills development workshops delivered from October to May followed by 12 hours of mentoring at leading built environment practices across London, including Cullinan Studio, Frame Projects and Morris & Company. A public exhibition of student work is showcased at the end of the programme and participants receive continued support through education and practice via their alumni network.

During 2022–23, the programme supported 96 students from 25 boroughs across London, who worked with 25 professional mentor practices from multiple architectural and design agencies. Of those student participants:

- 90 per cent were from an ethnic minority background
- 39 per cent were eligible for free school meals
- 43 per cent were the first in their family to go to university
- 14 per cent lived in social housing
- 100 per cent attended non-fee-paying schools

75 per cent of the 2022 Accelerate graduates secured offers to study architecture and related subjects at university in the year following their participation in the programme. The organisation has announced that it will launch a programme in partnership with Birmingham City University in 2023.



CASE STUDY: MUSIC MASTERS AND BIRMINGHAM CITY UNIVERSITY

Music Masters is a charity committed to widening access to high-quality music education from early years to young adulthood. Under the tagline 'Every child should have music in their life', it delivers an immersive music-based curriculum starting in primary school and offers ongoing support and talent development. Predominantly London-based, it operates within communities facing systemic inequality and disadvantage. As part of its commitment to inclusion and diversity across the music sector, it provides a number of targeted interventions.

One of its programmes, Pathways, is designed specifically

to help promising and committed young instrumentalists in key stage 2 achieve their greatest potential while addressing the lack of inclusion and diversity in classical music. Key facts about the programme include:

- To date, 25 pupils have graduated from the Pathways programme
- 100 per cent of applying Pathways graduates have been awarded places at the junior departments of world-leading conservatoires, including the Royal College of Music, Royal Academy of Music, Guildhall School of Music & Drama and Trinity Laban Conservatoire of Music and Dance
- Eight out of 25 graduates have received a music bursary or scholarship

“Pathways has opened up the opportunity to explore the National Gallery, Royal Academy of Music, Royal College of Music and Guildhall School of Music & Drama... It’s a winning experience for them that they can’t get another way, and for the parents, it opens up an opportunity to explore their futures... The confidence they have gotten is so huge. Without Pathways, I don’t think they could’ve gained that.” – Ning, parent of a participant in the Music Masters programme

Music Masters has also joined forces with Birmingham City University’s School of Education and Social Work to establish Musicians of Change (PGCEi), a year-long programme for musicians that is committed to transforming music education. Musicians of Change provides students with a broad range of professional, practical and academic experiences supported by a world-class team of practitioners, academics and mentors. Places on the programme are heavily subsidised and full bursary support is offered to Black and ethnically diverse or disabled music educators currently underrepresented in the sector. Students gain an internationally recognised Level 7 qualification and a PGCEi in Group Instrument Learning teaching certificate.

“The Musicians of Change (PGCEi) is a real eye-opening learning experience. It is pushing me to be a better teacher and person, with lectures and reading material that focus heavily on the experience of students and improving the quality of music education for all.” – Matt, a jazz and brass teacher

THEME 3: BEYOND ACCESS – BELONGING AND PROGRESSION

WP contains a tension between inclusive pathways into HE, including contextualised offers, and the discourse of competition that characterises traditional access routes to HE. It is important to acknowledge that access to primary- and secondary-level education across the UK is not equal. Therefore, meritocratic assumptions that underpin the current assessment frameworks should be questioned.

In this context, transition into HE for students who enter through non-traditional pathways is central to successful WP. Educational economists in the US have demonstrated the need for additional support (Dynarski et al, 2021).. Without this, well-intentioned outreach programmes that admit students who transition from non-traditional pathways into HE will struggle to make an impact.

Overall, there is evidence that interventions that provide pathways into HE do widen access. Examples include Curtis and Smith (2020) on the UK gateway to medicine courses and Li et al. (2023) on the success of Australian ‘enabling’ programmes. However, the ongoing participation of students from marginalised backgrounds is less conclusive.

Here, effective monitoring and evaluation of the impact of WP is essential. It must take into account degree completion and access to employment. This is a controversial agenda, with current government questioning the value of creative HE in the context of employment data (DfE, 2023). This should not distract from the need for better information on ‘What Works’ to support diversity.

Creative Majority (Wreyford et al., 2021) discussed the implementation of the ‘belonging agenda’ into certain areas of employment within the creative and cultural workplace (2021). This recognises that certain cultural and social norms have dominated creative labour markets, excluding marginalised communities. **Rather than the individual adapting to the dominant model, the institution must change to support an inclusive workplace.**

The belonging agenda emerged in the literature on WP. The issue of students’ unequal access to networks and information is matched by the key issues around perceptions of institutions being welcoming or not (Thomas et al., 2021; Donovan and

Erskine–Shaw, 2020; Scanlon et al., 2020). For example, regarding ethnicity, several research projects have demonstrated how HE expects individuals to change and adapt to the institution, but the institution is unwilling to change itself (Lambrechts, 2020; Thomas et al., 2021; Arday et al., 2022).

Transition into and through HE is often perceived as a “fraught process for many students, but particularly for those from diverse backgrounds” (O’Shea, 2020: 96).. In her work on WP in HE, Thomas (2002: 431) provides a conceptual understanding of the practices of HEIs and the impact they have on student retention. In doing so, she states how “institutional habitus should be understood as more than the culture of the educational institution; it refers to relational issues and priorities, which are deeply embedded, and sub–consciously informing practice”.

Access to certain norms, including cultural and social references, transport, housing and communication, is not universal. As we saw with audition fees to specialist creative institutions, the financial and social barriers to applications via auditions did not begin to be addressed until 2019. We also see this argument emerging in teaching pedagogy and the need to decolonise the curriculum to offer a less westernised and privileged knowledge bias (Arday et al., 2022).

A number of studies reflected on different interventions focused on the need for an effective transition to campus life and the development of the belonging agenda within HE. In Carrell and Sacerdote’s example (2017), mentoring can be effective: “Overall, we find that the mentoring treatment is largely acting as a substitute for the potentially scarce resource of parental help or skill. This in–person help could be in part offsetting problems of procrastination, disorganisation or fear of failure. However, despite lots of looking, we cannot find much direct evidence that lack of organisation or lack of self–esteem play a direct role in explaining why mentoring works.”

The root of effective mentoring (Raven, 2022; Pickering, 2021; Dodd et al., 2023) is with addressing the imbalance between the unequal resources of WP students and students from more privileged backgrounds (also in Dynarski et al.’s 2021 review of the literature).

There is also evidence of the specific need to support care–experienced students throughout their HE learning and beyond (Baker et al., 2022). Care–experienced young people who may not

have access to family support or living accommodation during the summer holidays and immediately post–graduation require additional support to ensure retention, degree completion and pathways into employment.

Students from lower socio–economic groups are more likely to live at home while studying at university (Thompson, 2017). This indicates a need for WP initiatives to consider local communities but also to understand the particular needs of ‘commuter students’. It can fragment the student experience and reduce the possibility of taking part in extracurricular activities. Providing term–time accommodation is one possible solution (Banerjee, 2018), as is helping with travel costs.

Rose et al. (2019) identify ‘crunch points’ in the application process, as well as more generally in terms of where information comes from and WP students’ attitudes to more selective universities that are not local (see also Pickering, 2021, and Wayne et al., 2016, on transition points). Identifying these crunch points for creative HE is an important task for WP policy. Doing so will make interventions such as the government’s Creative Careers programme more effective at reaching potential creative students and workers at the right points in their educational and working lives.

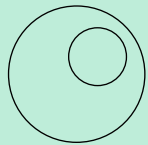
Money and debt are still an important consideration for many students (Budd, 2017). Although the rising costs of higher education to the individual have not deterred large numbers of students, there is evidence that subject and institutional choices, rather than the decision to attend HE at all, are being made on the grounds of debt and living costs (Evans and Donnelly, 2018; Shao, 2023).

Increased debt affects students’ ability to go on to postgraduate studies and their choice of employment post–degree (Purcell et al., 2013). This is a particular concern for creative professions, where it can take longer to establish a career, and the rewards may not be great for many years.

Financial support works (Reed and Hurd, 2016; Dynarski et al., 2021). However, because much of the evidence is from the US, much more information is needed in the UK context – for example, information on who receives bursaries, whether the allocation is equitable and by what criteria, and if they are achieving the desired aims (Banerjee, 2018; TASO, 2023).

All of these programmes need to be properly resourced

within HEIs (McLellan et al., 2016; Kettley and Murphy, 2021; Breeze et al., 2020; see also educational economics papers of Carrell and Sacerdote, 2017, and Dynarski et al., 2021). **The need for proper resourcing within universities is especially acute for mentoring and peer-support programmes.** These programmes, for example, students co-designing inductions (Woods and Homer, 2022), need training so they can give accurate information. There are considerable risks for WP students if trusted sources, such as mentors, give inaccurate information (Breeze et al., 2020).



CASE STUDY: ARTS EMERGENCY

Social justice charity *Arts Emergency* was set up in 2013 by activist Neil Griffiths and comedian Josie Long in response to deepening inequalities in both creative HE and the creative industries.

People from privileged backgrounds are four times more likely to get a creative job, with people from less privileged backgrounds often struggling to get their first break in the creative industries. Many internships and training programmes rely on personal connections, are only advertised by word of mouth and are frequently unpaid or underpaid. *Arts Emergency* aims to create potentially life-changing connections for young people without existing networks.

Driven by a vision of giving everyone the chance to contribute to the culture in which they live, it worked with an initial cohort of 20 London-based students from marginalised backgrounds who were interested in pursuing a future in the arts. The support it offered focused on 1-2-1 mentoring and activities that could give the students' knowledge of pathways into the creative sector. The organisation has now expanded its programmes to Brighton, Manchester and Merseyside and, in 2022, supported more than 1,300 young people aged 16-25 in these areas. It has plans to expand nationally so more young people can benefit from its services.

Arts Emergency has cultivated an ever-growing 'alternative old boys' network' of more than 9,000 people who work in or have studied the arts or humanities or who are passionate about breaking down barriers to ensure everyone gets a fair

shot at the future they want. This network powers the charity. Members volunteer to mentor and coach young people, offer work experience and paid opportunities, donate tickets to cultural events and more. In so doing, the network opens doors to industries including music, theatre, design and architecture – industries in which it is difficult for young people to gain a foothold without having connections.

Its long-term support system makes *Arts Emergency* unique. Young people in its community can access its programmes right up until they turn 26. This includes career clinics, CV reviews and exclusive opportunities to get hands-on experience in their chosen field of work so they can start building their own professional network, which can lead to additional opportunities and potential employment.

By February 2023, *Arts Emergency's* surveys of their community indicated that the majority (59 per cent) had gone on to HE following their mentoring experience. In terms of employment outcomes, 20 per cent were doing paid creative work and 23 per cent seeking creative work.

Arts Emergency has become a leading voice in highlighting the critical need for change in the creative and cultural industries and for workplace diversity and inclusive opportunities to be more than a tick-box exercise. By growing its network of like-minded people, empowering them to be advocates in their own workplaces and to take practical steps to make real change, such as offering paid traineeships, it knows the arts and humanities landscape of the future can and will look different.

CONCLUSION

Attendance and even graduation from university does not offer a complete solution to widening the participation of groups currently marginalised in the creative sector. Even if WP is successful at undergraduate level, there are still significant barriers to entry pathways into creative employment, as outlined in *Creative Majority* (Wreyford et al., 2021).

In addition, more students going to university has created an opportunity trap (Brown et al., 2011) where demand for limited jobs goes up and entry becomes more difficult (Budd, 2017). Additional

experience outside of HE, such as open-market internships, becomes a normalised pathway into creative and cultural work. This has widened social inequalities across the sector. We discuss this issue in our subsequent paper.

Even with progress at undergraduate level, lower socio-economic groups are underrepresented in postgraduate education (Budd, 2017), something that is now frequently required in competitive job markets. WP should not, therefore, stop at the undergraduate level.

Taking the individual as the starting point is a core theme in the WP literature. This manifests in the need for capabilities (Rose et al., 2019) or strength-based approaches (Dodd et al., 2023; Krutkowski, 2017; Whelan et al., 2023). These approaches aim to adapt to what WP students have to offer, rather than seeing WP students as a problem to be fixed.

This is reflected in the need for bespoke individualised programmes (Farini and Scollan, 2021). Purely information-based programmes, for example, which raise awareness of the range of degree options, are likely to be ineffective (Dynarski et al., 2021) as they are insufficiently targeted and individual (Carrell and Sacerdote, 2017). They also miss the contextual causes of lower rates of applications and entry (Rose et al., 2019) – for example, the types of information accessed, the advice from networks and when the information is given (Pickering, 2021).

There is some evidence for the successful use of technology-based approaches, such as lecture recordings (MacKay et al., 2021), learner-centred MOOCs run in partnership with community groups (Lambert, 2020) and reaching potential students through new online channels like vlogs (Hirst, 2022). However, the TASO (2023) overview in this area suggests the evidence base is mixed, particularly in the context of understanding online teaching practice during the pandemic. Moreover, Ross (2022) warns of the need for much more critical awareness of what the future of education is aiming to achieve with technology.

There is also potential to use creative activity itself in WP, for both creative HE courses and general HE WP. Creative activities at open days (Allison, 2016), in schools (Geagea et al., 2019) and to engage young people (Lewis, 2014); theatre workshops for cross-cultural communication in social work courses (Burroughs and Muzuva, 2019); and arts workshops to help refugee students integrate (Whelan et al., 2023) are all good examples. Yet there

have been few formal ‘What Works’ evaluations in this area, and the mechanisms driving positive outcomes and how to scale activities needs further analysis.

A final concluding point returns to the broader theme of institutional change. For Breeze et al. (2020), it is also important to recognise how many of the issues WP students face are those that are common to all students. These include orientation to how things are taught, accessing timetables and rooms and finding a community. HE doing better for all students, particularly in terms of resourcing and individualised approaches, will mean better experiences for those from diverse backgrounds. This is in addition to the support we have outlined and is not a substitute for well-resourced, targeted interventions.

Our policy recommendations outline a key set of immediate interventions for government and HE providers to coordinate in the development of the WP programme across the UK. Other papers in this research series focus on specific initiatives linked to ‘What Works’ for apprenticeships and WIL. We conclude this paper with the statement that WP should operate throughout the individual student’s HE experience, including equitable access, transition, experience of learning, degree completion and onward employment.

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'What Works' to support equity, diversity and inclusion in creative education:

WORK-INTEGRATED LEARNING AND INTERNSHIPS

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POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS

Recommendations for government:

- Open-market internships can be a major source of inequality in the creative economy. DCMS and its non-departmental government bodies, such as national Arts Councils, Creative Scotland, and the British Film Institute, should do more to monitor these negative working practices and penalise those companies and organisations that use them. While this relates to industry-based practice, the negative impact of open-market internships on creative and cultural employment creates a barrier to work-integrated learning programmes within higher education.

Recommendations for Higher Education Institutions (HEIs):

- Systematic monitoring and regulation of work-integrated learning internships are needed, along with clearer policies on diversity. Both of these should be led by HEIs. Advance HE recommended this in 2010, but it has yet to be implemented.
- As part of this, much more detailed knowledge is needed about effective practice for integrating work experiences, of whatever kind, into higher education programmes by HEIs. This is so higher education and industry can share effective practice for supporting equity, diversity and inclusion.
- There is a clear need for improved monitoring of work-integrated learning provision at higher education level and its impact on graduate outcomes. Further qualitative research needs to be conducted by HEIs into the experience and impact of work-integrated learning within higher education on both students and staff.
- This research has identified a skills gap and lack of recognition within higher education for those tasked with designing, implementing, managing and evaluating effective work-integrated learning. This report recommends formal recognition of work-integrated learning programmes by HEIs. This recognition means both academic and professional services staff will have relevant skills training, time and other necessary resources integrated within workloads.

- Based on the literature reviewed as part of the ‘What Works’ approach, we recommend HEIs and industry work with an independent intermediary organisation to manage the dissemination and monitoring of a work-integrated learning programme.

CONTENTS

126	OVERVIEW
126	WHAT IS AN INTERNSHIP?
128	METHODS
130	WORK-INTEGRATED LEARNING: WHAT DOESN'T WORK
133	FOSTERING EQUITY OF ACCESS, INCLUSION AND DIVERSITY IN THE CREATIVE AND CULTURAL WORKPLACE
135	Theme 1: Curriculum design focused on WIL
137	Theme 2: Work-simulated learning
137	Case Study: Work Simulation on Bournemouth University's BA in Media Production, Client and Audience Module
138	Theme 3: Partnerships with industry and intermediary bodies
141	Case Study: Northumbria University's Effective Partnerships
143	Case Study: DFN Project Search
145	CONCLUSION
147	REFERENCES
150	APPENDIX

OVERVIEW

Work experience, and specifically internships, has become a controversial element of access to employment across the creative economy. Although widely valued – for example, the recent Transforming Access and Student Outcomes in Higher Education (TASO) review of evidence on equality in graduate employment and employability rated work experience as one of the most powerful forms of intervention (Ramaiah and Robinson, 2022) – there is criticism on the relationship between internships and equitable access, as addressed within this report.

In the context of access routes to the creative economy, internships have evolved into a normalised pathway for early-career creatives. They have become a normative rite of passage for those wishing to gain direct experience and contacts (Frenette and Dowd, 2020; Brook et al., 2020).

However, over a decade of research on internships has demonstrated that certain sectors have taken advantage of the unpaid labour source that internships provide (Divine et al., 2007; Smith, 2015). This has created a system of hidden access points that are only available to those with the economic capability to support prolonged periods of unpaid work (Perlin, 2012; Brook et al., 2020). This is a key barrier to social mobility within the wider UK employment market (Sutton Trust, 2018) with the creative and cultural sectors identified as one of the worst sectors for adopting exploitative and unregulated internships (Arts Council England, 2011; Frenette, 2013; Allen et al., 2010; Allen 2013; de Peuter and Cohen, 2015).

This report addresses this paradox. It summarises the relevant literature and evidence that demonstrates ‘What Works’ to facilitate equitable, inclusive and diverse access to creative employment via internships as part of a broader remit of work-integrated learning (WIL).

WHAT IS AN INTERNSHIP?

Defining what an internship is can be a difficult task. According to the Trades Union Congress (2022), the word ‘intern’ is a label that has been applied to any individual undertaking some form of work experience. Writing in 2017, the Institute for Public Policy Research

identified that there was no universally agreed definition of an internship nor clear monitoring of the role that interns play in the wider labour market (Roberts 2017).

Internships are not recognised within UK employment law. The official gov.uk information states that an intern can only access basic statutory employment rights if classed as a worker (2023). There is no legislative obligation to class an intern as a worker from the employer’s perspective and, unlike volunteers, they are not protected via the Equality Act 2010. In addition, there is no official guidance on how long an internship should last nor how many internships can be undertaken by an individual.

The complexity and ambiguity of internships have led to various interpretations of their value. An important distinction needs to be made between ‘open-market internships’ and internships that have been undertaken as a form of WIL. WIL internships are usually facilitated through an official learning provider/education institution.

An ‘open-market internship’ is an internship usually taken after a degree has been completed. It is an internship managed directly between the internee and the organisation where the internship takes place. Open-market internships are distinct from internships that take place as part of an educational course.

Further clarification is necessary to unpack the concept of WIL within education. In the review of the wider literature into internships within education programmes, various terms were used, including work placements, work experience and work-based learning (WBL). There was no clear universal application of a term to a specific mode of practice.

For this report, we apply the term work-integrated learning (WIL) to define the model linked work placement interventions within HE. Following Atkinson, WIL refers to a variety of initiatives where “the theory of the learning is intentionally integrated with the practice of work through specifically designed curriculum, pedagogic practices and student engagement” (Atkinson, 2016: 2).

Although these terms are often used interchangeably, Atkinson distinguishes WBL as integral to the vocational education and training (VET) system that takes place in a work context. In the

glossary (Appendix 5.1), we include a list of relative terms to WIL, demonstrating the complexity of this field. .A

Experience of work can give students an advantage in labour markets, whether creative or in other parts of the economy. Currently, those advantages are accessed by those with lots of existing resources and privileges. This is why HE-led WIL, which monitors the selection process and evaluates the effectiveness of such programmes, is key.

From a skills development and employability perspective, WIL programmes within HE are widely regarded as providing individuals with tacit knowledge of a specific labour market. They offer an opportunity to develop real-world insight into a job role, create contacts and provide an access route to employment. They promise the building of so-called ‘soft skills’ that are learnt through interactions with professionals in the workplace yet also provide student participants with certain protections and accountability not accessible to those undertaking open-market internships.

This distinction is important. As discussed, the vagueness surrounding what an internship is, coupled with the absence of protective legislation, has led to a multitude of interpretations that have contributed to unfair and exploitative practice. Making a distinction between open-market internships and WIL enables targeted, evidence-based policy recommendations.

METHODS

This paper is based on ‘What Works’ to foster equitable access to employment within the creative economy with a focus on internships as part of a wider shift towards WIL within HE and further education (FE).

As discussed in our introductory paper, this report applied a systematic literature review to the question of ‘What Works’ to support equity, diversity and inclusion for work-integrated learning and internships in creative education? Search terms were inputted into the Scopus research database with results limited to journal articles published after 1998, the year of New Labour’s initial HE reforms (see Table 1).

Table 1

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

The research team did an initial review of article abstracts from which relevant literature was divided into specified themes that emerged from the literature. Articles were grouped according to theme rather than discipline or geographical location. Different members of the research team then reviewed each theme, creating summary documents based on the ‘What Works’ framework.

This paper outlines three main areas of interest that emerged from the review of the literature alongside written evidence submissions, roundtable consultation events and the existing creative industries research expertise of the project team: curriculum design focused on WIL; work-simulated learning; and partnerships with industry and intermediary bodies.

Each theme is explored in turn, drawing on the wider evidence identified through the systematic review of the literature and including case study examples of good practice from contributing organisations. As already outlined, we know from some evidence that integrating an internship within an organisation as part of a WIL educational programme can create an opportunity for skills enhancement. There is also evidence of the positive impact on employability and earnings in terms of graduate outcomes (Margaryan et al., 2022; Krishna and Babu, 2021; Lehmann, 2019), specifically for those undertaking a creative/arts-based degree (Frenette et al., 2015; Frenette and Dowd, 2020). Yet these opportunities are not equally shared or accessible to all, even within the model of HE.

As a result, messaging on the value of internships as part of a WIL model should come with a warning that such programmes can only work if they are designed, managed and monitored effectively. In this report, we first outline what doesn't work in relation to the adoption of internships as part of WIL models in education before outlining models of practice that emerged from the 'What Works' framework.

WORK-INTEGRATED LEARNING: WHAT DOESN'T WORK

The shift towards employability as a key graduate outcome has been widely documented, with attention paid to the importance of producing 'job-ready' graduates (Ashton and Noonan, 2013; Byrom and Aiken, 2014). WIL is an important element of this employability agenda, and much of this framework is based on the concept of 'experiential learning' (Dewey, 1916; Kolb, 1984). This means learning through work as opposed to learning *for* work.

WIL internships provide an opportunity for students to experience a particular workplace during their educational programme. This enables opportunities for reflection and development as part of an accredited learning environment.

It is clear from the literature that a significant number of HE institutions across the UK have implemented some form of WIL programme within their degree structure. However, due to the lack of guidance on how WIL should be both managed and monitored within curriculum design and assessment, the delivery is patchy and ad hoc (Ashton, 2016).

This is particularly relevant to creative-based HE courses whereby, in some cases, WIL mirrors the open-market model, requiring that students self-organise and self-manage as part of their degree programme. Research suggests that replicating the open-market system within HE reproduces the social inequalities identified across the industry (Allen et al., 2010; Frenette and Dowd, 2020).

A significant number of research articles consulted as part of this review pointed to the workload required to implement a successful WIL internship programme within HE. Writing in the context of Australia, Hewitt (2022) illustrates how HE has become the de facto regulator of all WIL due to a lack of coherent

infrastructure. Based on 68 semi-structured interviews with Australian-based HE representatives, the paper highlights how the exponential rise of undergraduates has made management of WIL internships/placements challenging, particularly in relation to securing industry partners and effective governance:

"We would have at least 20,000 [placements] a year... if you don't have an enterprise solution that's consistent and over-time workflowed and systemised, you will die under the level of paperwork that you need to maintain that and people get frustrated and work around it. So, we absolutely have a corporate view around wanting to embed [WIL] in all learning outcomes and people demonstrate components of that but then you need a system to manage it." (Hewitt, 2022: 82)

Other examples from Canada (Brown, 2023), the US (Behn et al., 2012; Holsti et al., 2012) and India (Krishna and Babu, 2021) demonstrate that the creation and coordination of an effective WIL programme within HE requires specific skills and the necessary resources, including time and administrative support, factored into a HE professional's workload.

Unmanaged WIL programmes within HE can act as a deterrent for future creative and cultural workers. They can be discouraged from pursuing a career in the sector due to witnessing unfair power dynamics and an absence of role models.

Research commissioned by the Equality Challenge Unit (ECU, now Advance HE) on HE-managed work placements in the creative and cultural sector demonstrated the inequalities faced by students when tasked with finding self-directed, open-market style internships as part of their degree course (Allen et al., 2010; Allen, 2013). The same research found those from marginalised backgrounds linked to race and gender were discouraged from pursuing a career in the creative sector as a result of their WIL experience during HE.

The ECU published a toolkit for HE providers with a series of guidance notes for effective, diverse and equitable access to work placements (Advance HE, 2010). One such recommendation was for systematic monitoring and regulation of WIL internships, along with clearer policies on diversity. So far, this systematic monitoring and regulation of WIL internships has not been introduced across the UK HE sector.

What is learnt in WIL is another crucial issue in the context of potentially negative or unfair experiences of work. If interns

witness or experience models of bad practice, then what can be learnt is that the industry is an unsafe and unwelcoming place. This can act as a deterrent for those who do not see a role for themselves within the sector and lead to wider inequality.

Because the WIL model assumes that what is 'learnt' is free from harm, it does not consider the subjective experiences of creative work (Nisbett and Walmsley, 2016; Coate et al., 2023). We already know that diverse identities can be marginalised or even excluded from the creative economy (Brook et al., 2020). Equitable access to employment through skills development can only take place if it corresponds to a wider shift towards equitable participation and employment across the entire life cycle of employment. This, obviously, includes WIL.

WIL must also create the opportunity to provide feedback on negative experiences to the industry to support meaningful change in working practices. Otherwise, WIL places the impetus on the student to either accept and engage in harmful and unfair employment models or reject creative work altogether.

A further challenge for WIL is competition with the open-market model. Unregulated internships are likely to undermine HE-based WIL interventions. As a result, unregulated internships taken outside of a formal course setting may reproduce the same issues attached to vulnerability, exploitation and widening inequality associated with open-market internships.

Evidence from German and Austrian analysis suggests the length and type of internship, as one form of WIL, matters. Mandatory internships, taken as part of WIL HE courses, are less effective for labour market outcomes than those where students have agency over choosing to take part (Klein and Weiss, 2011; Bittmann and Zorn, 2020). While the mechanisms underpin the different benefits, the findings show that students need some freedom to choose WIL as part of their course and support to find high-quality work experiences.

Finally, a major issue with the inclusion of internships/work placements as part of an HE or FE WIL course can prevent students from undertaking part-time paid work to supplement their income during education. While the balance between full-time study and paid work for living costs is complex, it is important to recognise the trade-offs between WIL engagement for later career success and the immediate needs of part-time paid work. Lack of recognition of these trade-offs may lead to WIL replicating exclusions and barriers for diverse cohorts of students.

FOSTERING EQUITY OF ACCESS, INCLUSION AND DIVERSITY IN THE CREATIVE AND CULTURAL WORKPLACE

Following an extensive systematic literature review of peer-reviewed evidence, three main themes were identified as providing relevant insights: curriculum design focused on WIL; work-simulated learning; and partnerships with industry and intermediary bodies.

It is important to reiterate, along with the other APPG for Creative Diversity reports, that much of the literature reviewed for this topic has been drawn from other sectors that are not related to the creative and cultural industries due to a critical lack of evaluation and evidence on effective practice within this area.

Theme 1: Curriculum design focused on WIL

WIL-focused curriculum design emerged as an effective practice, with good evidence of employability for students. Through our review, evidence was drawn from institutions based in different countries, including Spain, Turkey, the US, Jordan, Australia, Canada and India alongside the UK, and we refer to these studies throughout this section. This demonstrates the global interest in applying and measuring this WIL model within HE.

The review found various approaches to gathering data on the relationship between WIL curriculum design and graduate outcomes. There is little consensus around how to measure graduate outcomes. This makes international comparisons problematic. Methods include comparative surveys undertaken at a specific timeframe following graduation, along with interviews conducted with students, HE and industry-based providers involved in WIL programmes.

The majority of research focused on employability with either no, or very little, reflection on what counts as 'good' or 'valuable' employment. One study (Greer and Waight, 2017) illustrated a distinction between 'employability' and 'career success' from a subjective perspective but did not provide conclusive evidence on how that is measured. There is evidence to suggest (for example, Cord and Clements, 2010) that undertaking an internship as part of an HE degree does increase employability. However, very few studies are disaggregated across characteristics such as gender, race, ethnicity or social class.

Thus, there is a need for much more detailed evaluations of WIL interventions and the impact on employability. **There was a paucity of studies providing robust evidence regarding graduate employment outcomes in the creative sector in relation to participation in a WIL course or any comparison of the effectiveness of different learning models.**

Some studies gave clear indications of an increased percentage of success outcomes between cohorts. Other reports focus on student satisfaction outcomes and increased employability. As one report for the University Vocational Awards Centre at the University of Bolton mentions in its introduction (Brennan, 2005), 'employability' is one of a few ubiquitous terms that run the risk of being regarded as meaningless.

One aspect of WIL linked to employability is the development of 'soft' skills. While highly regarded, the concept of soft skills can be problematic if the applied interpretation reinforces a particular persona onto candidates leading to emotional strain on them to perform. This approach to raising employability emphasises becoming a good 'fit' for industry and seeks to homogenise the workforce, which, as previously discussed, can work against marginalised students who do not have relevant role models (Allen et al., 2010).

Morrison (2014) considers how HEIs can help foster a level of engagement among students to relate critically to the idea of transferrable skills and how they impact their understanding of their own employability. This is because "the transferable skills that employers want – particularly the 'soft' skills – come heavily raced, classed and gendered" (p.195).A

More useful are programmes that target a specific skills gap. An example from Spain (Castelló et al., 2023) considers a WIL model developed as part of a diploma for chemical engineering graduates. The programme responds to a larger demand for sustainable food systems, driven by climate change. The course was split 50:50 in terms of academic and industry delivery, with a final 250-hour internship in a food company as an official requirement of the diploma. One outcome identified in this model is that it attracted a higher number of female students than male, providing growth in employment for women in engineering.

Another example is from a British digital fashion degree (Ryan, 2020). This WIL comprised a 10-month paid internship undertaken in partnership with a UK HE provider, Arts University Bournemouth.

It was set up to address an industry-specific skills gap. Based on qualitative interviews with graduates, there is evidence that this approach enabled targeted opportunities for those participants. It is also an example of the need for more data on the programme's relationship to broader graduate outcomes.

These examples demonstrate the potential for targeted WIL to facilitate employment opportunities in new labour markets and emerging employment roles. These roles are created through advances in technology and shifts in consumer demand. As such, they are well suited to a dynamic sector such as the creative industries.

Theme 2: Work-simulated learning

Work-simulated learning models are where employment is reproduced or simulated within the education setting. They also cover a range of associated practices, including mentoring schemes, employability modules, HE-based incubators and assignment tasks set by industry. These activities bring practitioners and stakeholders from industry into HE, either as mentors, teachers or assessors or as part of incubators, hubs or labs.

Job simulations within the education environment are a good example. While the literature has little that fits within a formal 'What Works' framework, there is evidence that job simulations can create innovative partnerships between HE institutions and employers. **There is also evidence that job simulations can reach students for whom other types of internships and WIL might not be appropriate due to barriers such as the need to undertake paid part-time work to support academic participation.**

Jaffar et al. (2010) reported on a partnership that simulated a typical IT business/enterprise, including devices, types of programmes used and business situations. Students suggested they gained insights into the world of business from the programme, but there was no detailed evaluation to demonstrate effective sustainable impact on diversity.

Similar models have been introduced in the US. Marquardson (2022) refers to the integration of an outpost cyber security company based within a university campus to provide students with work experience opportunities. Again, the evaluation did not fit a formal 'What Works' approach, but the paper provides some

lessons on how job simulation schemes can be effective.

Programmes need to tailor training and assessment levels to students' pre-existing work experiences. Programmes must also ensure the balance of incentives works between the employer/partner and the academic institution. In Marquardson's example, the host university paid the participating students, which facilitated employer engagement. In turn, this meant there were questions about long-term financial sustainability and thus this needs to be ensured early in future programmes. More regular contact with students was also needed, rather than leaving them to complete the full job simulation. Finally, making sure the host has the right technical capacities and legal frameworks in advance of the partnership is essential.

These recommendations have echoes of good widening participation (WP) practice as discussed in our other report. Moreover, tailored training and assessment, the need for more regular contact and setting the right incentives between employer and educational institution are vital to successful apprenticeships, too.

WIL has been used for journalism programmes. Valencia-Forrester's (2020) paper includes a summary of different WIL and WBL models with details on whether these were industry or university-led. It then assesses the impact across industry exposure, student agency, accessibility and staff workload. From this analysis, traditional internships struggle to offer student agency and accessibility, two aspects that are vital to fostering diversity in creative industries.

Traditional internships do offer high levels of industry exposure and are relatively low intensity for academic staff. In contrast, simulation-based models, including pop-up newsrooms, online simulations, event and advocacy-based journalism WIL, and flipped classrooms were more effective. While all these approaches are much more demanding in terms of staff time, their potential effectiveness to deliver greater accessibility is striking. As our work on WP has shown, proper resourcing is central to the success of diversity initiatives. The same is true for WIL to avoid replicating the failures of open-market internships.

Evaluations of work-simulated learning programmes are still an emerging area, particularly for courses related to creative industries. As such, 'What Works' type evaluation of these interventions is limited. As this is an under-researched area, a key

recommendation is to strengthen knowledge of work-integrated learning programmes facilitated through HE institution-industry partnerships as an opportunity for EDI-driven WIL models.



CASE STUDY: WORK SIMULATION ON BOURNEMOUTH UNIVERSITY'S BA IN MEDIA PRODUCTION, CLIENT & AUDIENCE MODULE

Bournemouth University has included the Client & Audience module as part of the second-year BA (Hons) Media Production course since 2014. Students are organised into small project-focused teams – seven students per group – and tasked with developing a media solution to a communications challenge put to them by an external organisation.

Each project group operates like a small production company/agency, allocating themselves roles such as Account Manager, Creative Director and Project Manager. Dr Richard Wallis, who designed the original module, stated:

"We work mainly with organisations based in the Dorset region from a wide range of sectors, from industry to charities, healthcare initiatives and local authorities. As aspiring media producers, it's essential that students learn how to respond to the requirements of a third party and manage that relationship – media production doesn't happen in a vacuum."

The first meeting with clients is held at the university's Executive Business Centre and includes students hosting their clients over lunch. Clients describe their work to the students and outline the challenges at the heart of the brief they are giving them. As a way of minimising risk, each client is allocated two groups that work independently of each other. Following the first client meeting, each group then works intensively to creatively address the specific brief they have been given within a seven-week timeframe. Dr Wallis explains:

"The entire process, from the selection of clients to the delivery of the products, is carefully managed by the university. Clients understand that our primary role is to provide a safe space for students to learn. The point of this kind of project-based learning is that students must be allowed to make mistakes along the way."

The module culminates in a formal public presentation of

student work, and while there is feedback from the client as part of this process, tutors' assessment of projects is based not only on the quality of the work produced but on the overall management of the project, effective management of the client relationship and the written and verbal presentation of their ideas.

"Client & Audience was a really hands-on module," recalls Nathan Miller, videographer at US management consultancy Oliver Wyman and a recent Bournemouth graduate. *"For a lot of us, this was our first time working for a client – an invaluable experience that gave us insight into work in a real-world environment."*

It seems to work for clients, too. *"It was a great opportunity to engage with students and see the breadth of their efforts at the end of the seven-week period,"* said recent participant Gareth Owens of Dorset Community Foundation. Kate Hibbitt of HealthBus, another participant, agrees: *"The work created was outstanding. I was so impressed with their ideas, delivery and professionalism."*

Theme 3: Partnerships with industry and intermediary bodies

Almost every aspect of WIL requires strong partnerships between HE and industry. These partnerships can be facilitated in a range of different ways, from ad hoc relationships with individual staff, local or regional HE and sector industrial strategies to formal intermediary organisations with responsibility for brokering WIL connections.

A study from Germany (Postiglione and Tang, 2019) referred to the German HE dual VET (vocational education and training) model (sometimes referred to as TVET: technical-vocational education and training). This is an integrated HE institution-industry collaborative model that supports extensive dialogue and cooperation between vocational education and industrial enterprises. Students spend time at a vocational school after completing their HE studies in order to immerse themselves in industry and real-world challenges and thus receive a two-phase qualification: a university degree followed by 18 months of practical training in vocational schools (Fürstenau et al., 2014). The system combines WIL with WBL in that students are based both in the classroom and in the workplace, hence the 'dual' system.

A key indicator of cooperation in Germany is that technical-

vocational training funds, venues, facilities and trained instructors are provided almost entirely by enterprises. Enterprises enter into training contracts with students and provide financial support through a training allowance. To prevent exploitation, the behaviours of enterprises and VET institutions are constrained by elaborate legislation related to the dual VET system. There are also specific types of regulations for different industries that specify the obligations of enterprises, qualifications of trainers and procedure of training. The government acts as a bridge between enterprise and vocational schools and shares some expenses with employers.

The government has a key role between VET institutions and employers. It sets up the legal framework and delegates the authority to all relevant groups, including local chambers of commerce, employers, labour unions and related government departments. It also ensures equality of access, irrespective of prior qualifications. This is an example of the importance of intermediaries for WIL. Intermediary bodies can serve as a bridge between HE and industry, to manage and evaluate internships and work placements.

The term 'creative intermediaries' (Jakob and van Heur, 2015; Dent et al., 2023) is a recent re-articulation of the intermediary concept within creative industries research (Negus, 2002). Part of this term covers a range of organisations, including unions, guilds and support networks that connect creatives to work rather than audiences.

Intermediary organisations are strong and well-represented in the non-profit sector of the creative economy. The literature (Espada-Chavarria et al., 2021) suggests that working with an intermediary body to manage an internship programme acknowledges the amount of time and labour required to facilitate effective and safe placements.

Various models of intermediaries emerged from the wider literature, including libraries (McCarl, 2021); bespoke centres such as the BioHealth Informatics Research Center, Indiana University and Purdue University Indianapolis; and regional development agencies such as the partnership between the Queens Economic Development Corporation and Queens College City University New York for a graphic design internship programme (Weinstein, 2015).

Creating WIL models between HE providers and the industry

for emerging employment opportunities also creates the possibility for research collaboration and reflection. Evidence on increasing employment opportunities for normatively marginalised communities, such as university students with disabilities, enables reflection to develop more inclusive hiring practices (Espada-Chavarria et al., 2021).

There is an argument for increased diversity across all workplaces, particularly since the pandemic. Businesses now use technology to support different working practices, such as working from home or remote working and collective offices (Felstead and Jewson, 2012). Despite the fact that “stereotypical views of the workplace as a large office or production site need rethinking” (Pegg and Candell, 2016), there is still relatively little in the literature about the ways these changes in the physical spaces of the workplace support development skills and worker identities. This presents an opportunity to develop targeted support for internships within small and medium enterprises (SMEs).

SMEs face particular difficulties hosting internships due to the fragility of organisational support and the availability of sufficient staff numbers (Walmsley et al., 2012). Smaller organisations often report a lack of confidence in their ability to manage and guide the development of a student intern (Caddell et al., 2014) and this is a particular issue for SMEs within creative and cultural sectors. One model that could both support students with particular access barriers and address the issues of internship provision across SMEs is remote working internship programmes using virtual learning environments (VLEs). While further research needs to be conducted in this area, increasing VLEs in HEI-led WIL could take pressure off SMEs where funding and resources are constraints.

As with work-simulated programmes, research on intermediary bodies highlights the importance of proper resourcing for programmes. **Time and effort are needed to create an effective and safe internship programme. This impacts intermediaries’ workloads and resources, as well as individual academics’ workloads** (Atkinson, 2016). The case study example below offers an example of a strong commitment to effective, partnership-led WIL delivery between Northumbria University and local creative and cultural organisations based in the North East.



CASE STUDY: NORTHUMBRIA UNIVERSITY'S EFFECTIVE PARTNERSHIPS

Northumbria University collaborates with several organisations based within the North East, including New Writing North and the Baltic Centre for Contemporary Art. Professor Katy Shaw, director of university partnerships at Northumbria University, described their approach to effective partnerships:

“The way in which we approach partnership working at Northumbria is that it is a stylistic trait of our delivery. It’s at the core of our strategy, how we think of ourselves both as an institution but also how we think about our civic role, responsibility and engagement and how it can reach into our aims around widening participation.”

Public engagement was identified as one of the pillars of their partnership model alongside teaching, learning and research, and impact and knowledge exchange. A key strength of the Northumbria model is the provision of financial support for internships both during HE and after graduation. Professor Shaw explains:

“With New Writing North, for example, we have a digital marketing internship that is ring-fenced for our students and our graduates. So once they’ve graduated, if they want to have a safe space to test a career in that, they can.”

Shaw explained that through partnerships, students can experience different sections of the industry they might not have even known existed.

The award-winning collaboration with the Baltic Centre for Contemporary Art, BALTIC x NU, is a case in point. Northumbria University has been working with the Gateshead gallery for 10 years, with a shared vision to support creative talent development, ‘place-making’, public engagement and artistic excellence.

The partnership co-delivers teaching and learning, research and impact activities to engage students and the public in key debates in the discipline. The MA in Fine Art offered by the BALTIC x NU partnership offers a research-rich environment with an internationally renowned faculty of artists, curators and writers. It not only provides valuable work-related experience but looks towards the future of cultural work as diverse, networked and socially transformative. Speaking about the importance of relationship building through partnership, Professor Shaw outlines:

“Baltic is... surrounded by a lot of working-class communities that have intergenerational worklessness, as well as immigrant communities and asylum communities, so we were all interested in thinking about how we diversify audiences but also diversify the art workforce itself. By developing a new MFA in Contemporary Arts, we’ve been able to make an impact by tackling big externally funded projects together, offering collaborative doctoral awards and co-curating exhibitions.”

As stated in the ‘what doesn’t work’ section, research indicates WIL is not recognised within HE employment structures as a factor of academic staff job descriptions and therefore not applicable with regards to promotion and progression (Hewitt and Grenfell, 2022; Brown, 2023). As such, it has relied on individuals within HE to create and manage a WIL model based on their own available resources, contributing to ad hoc and patchy dissemination of best practice. Moreover, this lack of resourcing means there is no single evaluative framework for judging outcomes or making comparisons.

Where there are examples of positive practice, there is a lack of consensus on managing and evaluating WIL. This is coupled with the absence of legislative protection for interns. The result is a knowledge and welfare gap, irrespective of the current policy emphasis on employability.

A system to manage WIL would enable the positive elements of WIL, particularly those that level the playing field when compared to open-market internships. The intermediary model provides a coherent system of internship management and dissemination, working as a bridge but in collaboration with the HE provider and industry organisation.

In the US, the Native American Research Internship (NARI) programme is a very effective scheme within biomedicine (Holsti et al., 2021). To address the multiple health crises American Indian and Alaska Native (AI/AN) populations are facing, the National Institutes of Health fund 10-week, paid summer research internships. They respect and support Native culture while providing hands-on basic, translational or clinical research opportunities to attract more AI/AN medical students.

AI/AN programme coordinators administer the NARI programme. Mentors include women and people from other

underrepresented groups. They all possess a cultural curiosity to learn from the NARI students and an ability to provide a supportive research environment. Given the small number of AI/AN scientists and clinicians, it is not always possible to match students with an AI/AN research mentor.

Those involved in the scheme have their work recognised: faculty mentors are not paid, but participation in the programme is valued in promotion and tenure decisions. Although the American tenure system differs from the British HE framework, key elements indicate an approach to designing a high-quality internship system that uses funding and resources from external stakeholders and supports academic staff so they can facilitate such initiatives.

Another example of effective practice emerged from a paper on DFN Project SEARCH – a transition-to-work programme for school-aged students with learning disabilities (Riesen et al., 2022). Originating in the US, DFN Project SEARCH brings together businesses, secondary schools and adult services agencies (i.e. vocational rehabilitation, intellectual and developmental disability agencies) to create intern partnerships to prepare students with disabilities for competitive integrated employment. Their model was set up using existing employment legislation, which in the US context relates to the Fair Labor Standards Act. DFN Project SEARCH has now evolved into an international franchise.

CASE STUDY: DFN PROJECT SEARCH



DFN Project SEARCH is a one-year, transition-to-work internship for students with a learning disability and/or autism. The organisation was originally set up in the US in 1996 to address the need for diverse recruitment in the healthcare sector. It has now grown to an international franchise, facilitating partnerships between education providers and businesses to deliver an evidence-based and quality-assured internship programme.

DFN Project SEARCH acts as an intermediary that sits between the education provider and the employer. It provides a clear accountability framework between the intern and the employer and manages the monitoring and evaluation of the programme.

The UK-based DFN Project SEARCH currently has 114

partnerships with employers from across the public and private sectors. The largest partnership is with NHS England, alongside partnerships with local authorities, HEIs, pharmaceuticals and estates management sectors. It has around 1,000 students on its internship programme every year. On average, 70 per cent of the young people graduate from their programme into employment, with 60 per cent in full-time paid employment.

A key element of the model is the attention to measuring impacts. This ability to deliver a programme and provide the necessary evaluation for all stakeholders, both students and providers, feeds into their future planning and ambition.

Claire Cookson, CEO, told the APPG:

"We are doing this to change lives and we are not going to cut corners. Our work is driven by our evaluative data and our ambition is to develop further. While we are pleased with our 70 per cent result, we want to find out what has happened to the other 30 per cent and our ambition is to facilitate 100 per cent of our young people into employment. The reason that this model works is because this is all we do. Our focus is on facilitative effective internship. We have the model and resources that we know work, and we can continue to monitor and develop it."

The DFN Project SEARCH UK has recently been awarded a UK government contract as part of a consortium working in partnership with the National Development Team for Inclusion (NDTi) and British Association of Supported Employment (BASE) to increase the number of supported internships to 4,500 per year by March 2025. As part of the commission, they have tested the Supported Internship Quality Assurance Framework.

As such, they are part of a shift towards the effective management and facilitation of internship opportunities. This management provides a clear accountability framework to protect the rights of all who participate and is driven by a commitment to social inclusion in the workplace.

CONCLUSION

During the 2023 House of Lords Communications and Digital Committee inquiry *At Risk: Our Creative Future*, witnesses and members gave voice to the perception that there is a mismatch between the education system and the needs of creative businesses. Whatever the validity of this perception, WIL within the context of degrees is one way of addressing these concerns.

At the same time, WIL provides a way of levelling the playing field between the unregulated world of open-market internships that underpin many of the hiring practices driving the lack of diversity in the creative industries, and the needs of the fast-paced, project-to-project, risk management needs of the creative sector.

However, there are still major challenges to understanding 'What Works' to support equity, diversity and inclusion in WIL for creative HE. The research base, as we have demonstrated, is still underdeveloped.

There is some data on gender with regards to WIL initiatives and access to certain professionals, but this is limited. There is very little on other forms of exclusion nor is there much on the intersectional nature of exclusions within the workplace and how to mitigate these exclusions through WIL.

Much of the research linked to this area is based on student surveys or employability alumni data. There is little robust evidence on the design process for WIL, the impact of different WIL models and alumni experiences. As Ramaiah and Robinson (2022) note, much more 'What Works' evidence is needed, including better data collection, a more concrete theory of change and much, much more testing and sharing of best practice across the sector.

The employability framework associated with WIL has not sufficiently addressed questions of equity, diversity and inclusion. There are ongoing issues of poor working conditions and practices in the creative economy. Challenging the creative sector to deliver 'good work' (Carey et al., 2023) is a key part of current government policy (DCMS, 2023).

These two issues suggest the need for a WIL curriculum designed to foster inclusive workplaces at its centre, rather than adapting to the ongoing issues of the creative economy's poor working practices. This task, alongside the need to attract industry

partners and generate better engagement from the industry with WIL, could be achieved by showing high-quality examples of effective practice.

To share effective practice, resources are needed. These include high-quality What Works research on WIL in creative HE, as well as resources to support HE, intermediary and industry staff engaged in WIL. There is also, in the context of ongoing inequalities in the creative economy, the ethical issue for HE in terms of sending students to WIL and staff conducting research.

WIL is one aspect of the work experience that is seen as essential to enter the creative sector. It is part of HE-based provision. There are also other work experience-based routes that offer formal qualifications as an alternative to HE (WBL or the VET model). Our next paper looks at the UK's system of creative apprenticeships, examining their role in equity, diversity and inclusion for the creative economy.

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APPENDIX

[Appendix 5.1: Glossary of terms and acronyms from the Scopus spreadsheet](#)



‘What Works’ to support equity, diversity and inclusion in creative education:

APPRENTICESHIPS

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POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS

Recommendations for government:

- DCMS and DfE, along with the Institute for Apprenticeships and Technical Education (IfATE), must formally rethink apprenticeships for creative occupations. They need a bespoke programme that relates directly to the actual reality of working practices and employer needs in the sector.
- DCMS, DfE, and IfATE should convene a taskforce, with employers, unions and freelancer representatives, to reimagine apprenticeship policy for the sector.
- The recommended DCMS/DfE/IfATE taskforce must work with employers and potential training providers to develop new standards and a new offer. ‘Trailblazers’ for higher-level apprenticeships are vitally important, particularly under the Apprenticeship Levy system.
- A major information and publicity campaign, delivered by this DCMS/DfE/IfATE taskforce, using programmes such as the DCMS Creative Careers Programme, is needed to improve industry perceptions of creative apprenticeships.
- This must sit alongside significant DfE investment in careers advice in schools and for young people. There is consensus that careers advice is neither well-resourced nor provides adequate information about creative industries, including apprenticeship routes.
- However, this can only follow when there are actual examples of large-scale policy success, as opposed to the brilliant but singular and unsystematic examples offered by our case studies.
- Successful case studies will be important to inform future apprenticeships policy. Given the very low numbers of creative apprenticeships, IfATE should conduct a ‘What Works’ review of successful case studies from the existing offer, including individuals’ discovery and experience of creative apprenticeships and their medium to long-term outcomes.

- The newly designed apprenticeship system must draw on the ‘What Works’ lessons of the previous sections of this report to support diversity in the creative sector.
- Our roundtables and literature review suggested significant reforms are needed to the Apprenticeship Levy, so it is more responsive to the needs of creative organisations and creative apprenticeships.

Recommendations for HEIs

- Given the very high level of degree-holding in the creative workforce, entry-level apprenticeships will be unlikely to diversify the sector on their own. A degree-level apprenticeship may, if developed and supported properly, offer similar status to the under- and postgraduate qualifications that are now so dominant.
- Degree apprenticeships could be a route to directly support mid-career creatives in developing leadership and management skills, recognised by a formal qualification. As a result, HEIs should take the lead in developing degree apprenticeships for creative occupations.
- It is vital that HEIs’ creative degree apprenticeships do not repeat the widening participation, nor the work-based learning, failures of the existing university system.
- Degree apprenticeships could also formally support those re-entering the creative sector, for example, after career breaks or family leave. HEIs should develop targeted schemes to support this aim.

CONTENTS

156	OVERVIEW
157	BACKGROUND AND CONTEXT
157	What are apprenticeships?
159	Who are apprenticeships?
163	APPRENTICESHIPS AND THE CREATIVE ECONOMY
168	Case Study: All Spring Media
169	METHODS
170	Case Study: Royal Shakespeare Company
172	QUALITY AND THE DEFICIT MODEL
174	LESSONS FROM OTHER SECTORS OF THE ECONOMY
175	For Recruitment
176	For Entry and Retention
177	Case Study: Resource Productions CIC
179	THE CHALLENGE OF DEGREE APPRENTICESHIPS
184	CONCLUSION
187	REFERENCES
191	APPENDIX

OVERVIEW

Apprenticeships are perhaps the most promising area for 'What Works' research on diversifying the creative economy. At the same time, the current policy regime has huge challenges if it is to realise that promise.

This paper introduces apprenticeships as part of the creative education landscape; summarises the literature on 'What Works'; offers case studies of potentially successful models; and has recommendations for policymakers, educators and creative organisations.

The current apprenticeship policy does not work for diversity in the creative economy. This is clear from both the academic research and the associated policy literature.

Apprenticeships, as the key alternative educational or training route into creative occupations, are therefore as much a story of what has not worked, as much as there are any insights into how diversity might be promoted and supported.

Current apprenticeship policy is not working in two ways:

- 1 Apprenticeships policy is struggling to deliver a more diverse general workforce. This is particularly true in the context of apprenticeship policy's focus on social mobility.
- 2 Current apprenticeships policy does not work for the creative economy, for a variety of reasons grounded in the design of the policy and the industrial and business organisation of the sector.

A well-designed apprenticeship system could be transformative for the creative sector. It could address the severe lack of diversity in senior roles; the problems of mid-career progression common to many creatives, particularly those from diverse backgrounds; and the need for more management and leadership skills (Gilmore et al., 2022) across the sector. This potential to impact senior roles is matched by the potential of apprenticeships as routes into the creative economy.

However, if the creative apprenticeships system is pitched as an alternative to higher education, it will never reach the parity of esteem needed in a sector where more than 75 per cent of workers have a degree.

What, then, can we learn from the academic research, the case studies and the policy literature?

BACKGROUND AND CONTEXT

What are apprenticeships?

Apprenticeships are accredited educational qualifications. There are four 'levels' in the current system:

- Intermediate: Level 2, equivalent to GCSEs
- Advanced: Level 3, equivalent to A-levels
- Higher: Level 4 and Level 5, equivalent to a foundation degree
- Degree: Level 6, equivalent to an undergraduate degree level, and Level 7, equivalent to a professional qualification such as a Chartered Accountant

Over the past 10 years, apprenticeships in England have undergone significant reform. The Richard Review (2012) and the Sainsbury Review (2016) implemented the present system.

The government has two stated aims for the current system: to raise productivity and contribute to social mobility (Nawaz et al., 2022; Learning and Work Institute, 2017; Evans and Dromey, 2019; Crawford-Lee, 2020).

The reformed system is supported by the Institute for Apprenticeships and Technical Education (IfATE). This is an employer-led non-departmental public body of the Department for Education (DfE), which approves and regulates apprenticeships. It works in partnership with relevant employers from across the economy to develop standards for occupations and the vocational and technical education to meet those standards.

The current system has several requirements for every apprenticeship: To have a minimum 12-month duration; a designated 20 per cent in-work formal training allocation; be based on 'employer-led' skills standards; have an independent end-point assessment; and have all apprentices achieving Level 2 Maths and English.

These requirements ran alongside the implementation of a 0.5 per cent Apprenticeship Levy on all employers with an annual pay bill over £3 million. The levy created an entirely new funding structure for vocational skills development. It has driven major changes to the types of apprenticeships on offer, as well as to the demographics of apprentices.

The levy has also generated significant debate, with notable criticisms on the types of apprenticeships it has been used to support; a lack of impact on apprenticeships policy aimed at supporting disadvantaged groups; a lack of flexibility on how the funding can be used, for example, to assist those in financial need; and the need for the levy to focus more on both social mobility and small and medium-sized enterprises. Indeed, some critics point to the levy as a causal factor for the overall decline in apprenticeship starts, with levy support assisting the already advantaged (Social Mobility Commission, 2020).

Criticisms of the current system, including debates over the levy, are not exclusive to the creative sector. Notwithstanding the general problems of the system (most recently summarised by UCAS, 2023), there are specific challenges in the creative economy.

Creative & Cultural Skills, the sector skills body for the creative sector, offers useful guidance for managers on how to employ and treat apprentices (CC Skills, 2022), along with useful resources reflecting on whether apprenticeships work for the sector (CC Skills, 2021). Yet despite support from the key skills organisation, the creative economy has not widely engaged with apprenticeships as a means of training and selecting new entrants. This is partially due to failures of the current policy system and also reflects a missed opportunity for the creative sector. **Apprenticeships have the potential to offer a route to addressing creative occupations' diversity deficits.**

The *Creative Majority* report (Wreyford et al., 2021), along with the other reports from this project, highlights the importance of skills, experience and job experience as part of getting in and getting on in creative occupations. 'Hiring as cultural matching' (Rivera, 2012; Koppman, 2016; De Keere, 2022) limits diversity as organisations and commissioners work with people like themselves or those who are either already known to them or recommended by their existing contacts.

Education, particularly having a degree, plays an important role in developing these networks and contacts (Friedman and Laurison, 2019). Moreover, where the degree is from can be as important as the choice of subject, helping individuals to be considered the right 'fit' (Wreyford, 2018) for a creative role (Koppman, 2016). Apprenticeships offer a potential solution to these enduring barriers to equity in creative industries.

In creative jobs, experience often comes from unpaid work (Brook et al., 2020a; Brook et al. 2020b). As our paper on internships discusses, this widespread practice has been criticised for exacerbating inequalities. Yet working without pay still offers a route for creative workers to develop networks and contacts, as well as the possibility of gaining skills and experience (Brook et al., 2020a).

Writing almost 30 years ago, the creative industries scholar Candace Jones captured the process of being 'socialised' into an occupation and the benefits that flow from understanding industry culture (Jones, 1996; Adler, 2021). In many creative occupations, the cultural and embodied capital of privileged, White, able-bodied potential workers gives them an advantage over more diverse candidates. Paid, on-the-job training, such as that offered by an apprenticeship, provides a powerful alternative to these more informal routes in.

In addition, apprenticeships, with their blend of work experience and education, offer a different type of learning to higher education courses. Research in education in apprenticeships has shown that it is a model that goes beyond learning through reading, writing and thinking. It also includes the body and skilled performance:

"Crafts – like sport, dance and other skilled physical activities – are largely communicated, understood and negotiated between practitioners without words, and learning is achieved through observation, mimesis and repeated exercise." (Marchand, 2008: 245).

Apprenticeships allow the individual to acquire the knowledge and skills necessary to do the job. They can also offer the social expertise and cultural belonging that demonstrates their status and right to be members of an otherwise elusive 'club' working in creative jobs (Adler, 2021). While the creative sector continues to recruit based on networks and contacts as much as skills, experience and qualifications, apprenticeships could offer a way to challenge this un-diverse status quo.

Who are apprentices?

The aims of raising productivity and social mobility, alongside the new policy landscape inaugurated by the Apprenticeship Levy, have meant important shifts in the demographics of apprentices.

DfE's (2022) evaluation of apprenticeships suggested that

Level 3 (A Level equivalent) was the most common type of apprentice (46 per cent of all apprentices), but higher levels were growing. This is especially true for degree apprenticeships (10 per cent), which we discuss in a specific section later in the report.

Business (24 per cent), health (24 per cent) and engineering (19 per cent) dominate subject areas. Arts are consistently less than 1 per cent of all apprenticeships, a problem we discuss in detail in the next section.

Nearly half (44 per cent) of all apprentices are now aged 25 and over (DfE, 2021) and 75 per cent worked with their firm for at least a year before starting the apprenticeship (Speckesser and Xu, 2022; Murphy and Jones, 2021). Levy funding has not generally focused on younger people. Both academic and policy analyses of the Levy (e.g. Cullinane and Doherty, 2020; Social Mobility Commission, 2020; APPG on Apprenticeships, 2021; Patrigan et al., 2021; Cavaglia et al., 2022; CEDEFOP, 2022; ScreenSkills, 2023) suggest it incentivised employers to focus on higher-level (and thus higher-cost) apprentices, usually from within their own staff.

Higher-level training is vital to the economy (Crawford-Lee, 2020). However, it is clear there is a mismatch between the perception of apprenticeships as a route into work for younger people and the reality of more established workers developing higher-level skills.

This mismatch extends to a range of other demographics. Those young people who do start apprenticeships are disproportionately from a more privileged background (Smith et al., 2021). This is a huge, missed opportunity for the policy, as apprentices who come from lower socio-economic backgrounds experience a bigger boost to their earnings when they complete an apprenticeship (Social Mobility Commission, 2020), and apprenticeships can boost wages for those who do follow HE routes after the end of compulsory education (Dickerson et al., 2023).

The limited impact on social mobility is shared by virtually all analysis. Indeed, the Social Mobility Commission was stark in its 2020 assessment, asserting that not only was the system not working, but also that “the main beneficiaries of apprenticeships are the people who do not need them” (Battiston et al., 2020).

More than 80 per cent of apprenticeships started by those from a disadvantaged background were in the service industries, health, education and public administration (Battiston et al.,

2020). Although earning while learning is one of the draws of apprenticeships, the low apprentice wage is often cited as a barrier, particularly for the most socially disadvantaged, and in addition, apprentices stand to lose access to benefits and become eligible for council tax (Skills Commission, 2018). Travel costs can be another barrier, particularly for young people in rural areas.

The most recent work (e.g. Cavaglia, et al., 2022) notes a dramatic decline in apprenticeship starts between 2015 and 2020, with a change in composition from lower to higher levels. Individuals from poor socio-economic backgrounds are underrepresented at all levels of apprenticeships and increasingly so at high levels. Indeed, 69 per cent of apprentices under the age of 21 have a parent who went to university (Smith et al., 2021).

In terms of gender, there is less inequality in the number of apprentices (although none of the literature considers gender outside of a binary framework), but gendered segregation by profession is still a problem. Men are significantly more likely to study craft, technical and engineering occupations and women to study subjects from lower-paid sectors such as social work and childcare (Skills Commission, 2018; Murphy and Jones, 2021). DfE's (2022) analysis suggested men were the majority of apprentices in construction (91 per cent), engineering (91 per cent) and ICT (78 per cent), while women were the majority in health (79 per cent), education (76 per cent), retail (61 per cent), business (59 per cent) and arts (57 per cent).

An initial study of the reformed apprenticeship system (Fuller et al, 2017) suggested the most popular advanced apprenticeship for men was engineering (32 per cent), while for women, it was child development and wellbeing (24 per cent). Average earnings for men on the engineering apprenticeship were £29,265; for women on the child development and wellbeing apprenticeship, average earnings were £12,038. Pay gaps were striking for the same subjects at the same levels: on the intermediate administration apprenticeship, men's average earnings were £19,095; for women, they were £14,438. On the advanced administration apprenticeship, men's average earnings were £22,072; women's were £16,514.

The gender inequalities in apprenticeships have a long history. The apprenticeship gender pay gap was 26 per cent in 2009 (Marangazov et al., 2009). Gendered comments and criticism,

still common in the workplace, also have a history of shaping apprentice career paths (Learning and Skills Council, 2009). As recently as 2005, the Equal Opportunities Commission gathered evidence of sexism in recruitment, such as women being told, “This is a job for big, strong men. We don’t want women coming in here with their hormones” in a factory (Miller, 2005).A

In terms of ethnicity, the inequalities are less stark. DfE’s (2022) analysis suggested racially minoritised individuals were 15 per cent of all current apprentices, a slightly higher proportion than the workforce overall (13 per cent in the 2021 Office for National Statistics Labour Force Survey). However, there are large variations between specific ethnic groups, and British Asians make up just 4.6 per cent of starters (Mutlib, 2020). This proportion has been consistent since 2018–19.

Levels 2 and 3 apprenticeships had a slightly higher proportion of White individuals (88 per cent). Racially minoritised individuals made up higher proportions of apprenticeships at Level 4 and above (18 per cent). DfE (2021) estimates clear under-representations in specific sectors, with low proportions in agriculture (3 per cent), construction (6 per cent), engineering (6 per cent) and retail (10 per cent).

There are also indications that these groups were less likely to complete and less likely to get a job even if they did complete. Even though the DfE’s (2021) analysis shows improvements since 2014, Cavaglia et al’s (2022) analysis of apprenticeships shows under-representation by race for younger starters, suggesting future issues for diversity.

Four per cent of apprentices identified as having a disability and 6 per cent a learning difficulty. These proportions were highest on Level 2 apprenticeships (9 per cent) (DfE, 2021). Employers need to be better informed about apprentices with disabilities and made aware of how they can be adaptable to differing needs in the workplace (Learning and Skills Council, 2009).

The struggles of the reformed apprenticeship system to meet social mobility aims are not new. The Social Mobility and Child Poverty Commission’s (2016) analysis of new starters suggested that in London, just 4 per cent of 16- to 19-year-olds start apprenticeships; the highest levels were in the Northeast, at 9 per cent.

APPRENTICESHIPS AND THE CREATIVE ECONOMY

The IfATE published a review of the apprenticeship offer for creative occupations in September 2021. This recognised the challenges facing the sector, both in terms of the need for flexible, multi-employer and micro-business apprenticeships and in the challenge of diversity as the sector recovered from the impact of the Covid pandemic. Indeed, promoting diversity and inclusion was the first of its principles for the future of creative and design apprenticeships (IfATE, 2021).

Following the reform and retirement of some of the initial apprenticeships on offer, the IfATE’s website, as of July 2023, lists 55 standards approved for delivery under the creative and design route (IfATE, 2023). This covers the majority of creative occupations and is the focus of this report. Some occupations, for example, games programming and digital design, fall under the digital route, but initial analysis suggests there are similarities between these apprenticeships and the problems facing the creative and design route.

The 55 standards capture a huge range of creative occupations, from journalists and curators through to live event technicians and visual effects artists. They also cover a range of levels: two at Level 2, 27 at Level 3, eight at Level 4, five at Level 5, three at Level 6 and 10 at Level 7.

The existence of 55 standards, across all learning levels, suggests some creative occupations are currently being served by the apprenticeship system. However, the story is more complex. **Apprenticeships need providers, end-point assessors and organisations offering vacancies.** Later in this report, we show the crisis in degree-level apprenticeship provision, but for now, it is worth remarking on the limitations of provision for Levels 2 to 5.

Six of the 55 standards are not accepting starters as they wait to find end-point assessors. Some, for example, junior animator (Level 4), have no providers. Others, for example, publishing assistant (Level 3), have a single provider, but no vacancies.

DfE (2023) data on vacancies since 2018 shows that only 24 of the current 55 standards have had any positions advertised. This does reflect some changes in the labelling and content of the standards; for example, the current ‘content creator’ standard has replaced ‘junior content producer’. At the same time, it reflects the struggle to provide access even where standards have been agreed.

There have been 1,010 adverts for the 24 standards since 2018. 518 of those were for spectacle makers, which are counted in the creative and design standards as they are a craft occupation.

If we look at areas more usually associated with creative occupations, we see 154 adverts for a creative venue technician, 93 for publishing assistant, 40 for live event technician, 28 adverts for broadcasting apprenticeships (across degree, higher and advanced levels) and 18 fashion studio assistants. Again, these are not large numbers of opportunities, either relative to the rest of the apprenticeship system (DfE estimates a total of 476,464 adverts for all apprenticeships since 2018) or relative to the dominance of degrees for those already working in the creative sector.

A useful case study is the role of journalist (Level 5). There have long been concerns about social mobility in journalism. In 2006, The Sutton Trust (2006) found over half of leading journalists went to private schools, and more than one-third who had been to university went to Oxford. They presented similar figures in their (2019) *Elitist Britain* report. The most recent research, from the National Council for the Training of Journalists (NCTJ), used ONS Labour Force Survey data to demonstrate the catastrophically low levels of working-class origin individuals working as journalists. Its 2022 reports (Spilsbury, 2021 and 2022) found that only 2 per cent of journalists were from working-class social origins. In contrast, 80 per cent were from middle-class social origins. These trends are getting worse, as in the 2021 report, 8 per cent had working-class origins and 75 per cent had middle-class origins.

The same research also demonstrated that journalism is now a graduate occupation. 89 per cent of journalists have a degree, and more than one-third (36 per cent) are educated to postgraduate level. In this context, the apprenticeship should be one element of addressing the social mobility crisis for this occupation.

Although journalism (Level 5) is reasonably well served by five providers listed on the DfE website, only one of these offers national coverage; the rest are in the South of England. Moreover, at the time of writing, there were no vacancies offering this apprenticeship. Indeed, a deep dive into DfE data (DfE, 2023) suggests there were only 11 adverts and 32 individual vacancies since it was introduced at Level 5 in December 2021.

Apprenticeships cannot be the solution to social mobility issues in jobs where there are few, if any, opportunities to participate in routes into these occupations.

These examples underpin our conclusion that the current system is failing the needs of the creative sector, as well as failing the needs of a more diverse workforce.

These are not new issues. Table 1 shows the total number of all apprenticeship enrolments, starts and achievements since 2017–18 plus the number of arts, media and publishing enrolments, starts and achievements.

Table 1: Apprenticeship numbers 2017–18 to 2022–23
(Source <https://explore-education-statistics.service.gov.uk/data-tables/apprenticeships-and-traineeships>)

		2017-18	2018-19	2019-20	2020-21	2021-22	2022-23
Total	Enrolments	870,000	793,720	779,270	760,070	782,580	651,840
	Starts	375,760	393,380	322,530	321,440	349,190	195,600
	Achievements	276,160	185,150	146,900	156,530	137,220	62,030
Arts, Media and Publishing	Enrolments	1,900	1,990	2,230	3,150	3,490	3,080
	Starts	950	1,000	1,240	1,990	2,010	1,080
	Achievements	560	550	500	610	650	380

The government’s own initial assessments of the impact of its 2015 apprenticeship policy reforms showed that within the 2017–18 cohort, arts, media and publishing apprentices represented just 0.21 per cent of all enrolments, 0.25 per cent of all starts and 0.2 per cent of all achievements.

Indeed, DfE data shows these low proportions of arts, media and publishing apprenticeship starts were persistently low over time, with 0.25 per cent in 2018–19, 0.38 per cent in 2019–20, 0.61 per cent in 2020–21, 0.57 per cent in 2021–22 and 0.55 per cent in 2022–23 (DfE, 2023).

Moreover, although achievement rates for arts, media and publishing apprenticeships are good compared to other sectors (Cavaglia et al., 2022), they still have an achievement rate of less

than two-thirds (under 66 per cent) annually between the years 2019 and 2022 (DfE, 2023).

It is striking that where analysis of the apprenticeship system has been conducted (e.g. Murphy and Jones, 2021), the low levels of arts, media and publishing apprenticeships means they are absent from detailed discussions.

This lack of take-up for arts, media and publishing apprenticeships, relative to other industrial sectors, should also be understood in relation to HE degrees as a route in. The sheer scale of difference, for example, where 90 per cent of London-based younger media sector workers have degrees, shows the extent of the challenge for policy.

To understand these issues in more detail, it is worth turning to two comments from a recent (2023) House of Lords' Communications and Digital Committee report on the future of the creative economy. They give the context for the issues facing apprenticeship policy for the creative economy. The Committee's *At Risk: Our Creative Future* report was critical of both current training provision for the creative sector (House of Lords, 2023):

"Post-16 education plays a critical role in developing skills for the creative industries. But training pathways are confusing for students and employers. Clearer routes into the industry are needed."

And the specifics of the current apprenticeships regime for creative jobs:

"The apprenticeship scheme remains poorly suited to a large proportion of creative businesses, who are unable to provide the required length of training placements due to the short-term, project-based nature of much work in the sector."

The identification of the clear mismatch between apprenticeship policy and the needs of the creative sector is seen in virtually every commentary on policy as well as the limited range of academic research on creative apprenticeships.

This mismatch is driven by many different factors. The need for a single employer to host the 12-month apprenticeship is immediately at odds with much of the project-based and freelance nature of creative work. The government has promised to explore flexible and multi-employer apprenticeships (DCMS, 2023), but this is only one part of the problem.

One of the few formal evaluations of current apprenticeship policy for the creative sector was equally critical. ScreenSkills'

(2023) recent work on their apprenticeships programme noted:

"Industry partners have stated that the external and internal costs of running the apprenticeship agency model as currently structured are unsustainable in the long term, particularly due to the resources required to identify sufficient suitable, continuous placements to provide on-the-job training at scale. Additionally, the industry partners feel that the lack of relevance and low quality of some of the standards and off-the-job training make these costs poor value for money and therefore less viable for production companies, especially compared with other routes for entry-level talent."

The struggles for creative sector apprenticeships are also a long-standing issue for vocational qualifications in general. They are not unique to the creative sector. Several academic and policy papers from our literature search, including Steedman et al. (1998), Fuller and Unwin (2003), DfES (2004), Campbell et al. (2005), Hogarth et al. (2012) and Patrignani et al. (2021) all stress the challenge of designing an apprenticeship system that delivers for both the economy and society.

The challenges of policy design and delivery are matched by the other dominant issue in policy-related literature, which is the long-standing lack of status for apprenticeships when compared to academic education routes. This is acute in the context of degrees. This issue was raised across our search, irrespective of the date of the paper, its subject, or whether it was policy or academic. **Against the backdrop of a sector that is dominated by degree-holders, creating parity of esteem for apprenticeships is an essential task for both policymakers and the creative sector itself.**

Parity of esteem is especially important in the context of diversity. Mutlib (2020) notes that the low status offered to apprenticeships manifests in scepticism from ethnic minorities as to the value of apprenticeships for their children when compared to the importance of degrees. More generally, Smith (2023), in a systematic analysis of five cross-national comparative research projects, demonstrates that in addition to parity of esteem issues, the attractiveness of apprenticeship opportunities is highly contextual; what appeals about apprenticeships to some social groups may be directly off-putting to others.

Synthesising 'What Works' in these circumstances is a complex task. Formal, 'What Works' style evaluations are extremely

rare and our literature review found no studies that exactly matched this framework. As with other areas covered by this project, there was a wealth of research, rich with both critiques and useful insights. Much was framed through the lens of what does not work, for apprenticeships in general, and for supporting diversity. For creative occupations, Davis and Parker (2013); Riley (2017 and 2021); Ashton (2015 and 2016); and Lahiff and Guile (2016) have various insights, and the recent ScreenSkills' (2023) programme evaluation provides valuable practical information.



CASE STUDY: ALL SPRING MEDIA

Founded in 2011, All Spring Media is a training provider that supports an inclusive and diverse workforce for the screen industries through a comprehensive range of entry and CPD programmes.

All Spring Media has helped more than 1,000 people get into the creative industries through traineeships, apprenticeships, pre-employment schemes and other training interventions.

Managing Director Martina Porter set up All Spring Media to create a bridge to access the film and television industry. She knew how tough it was to get into the business, so she wanted to help those who needed support to create a more inclusive industry.

All Spring Media now delivers high-quality training programmes that are led by industry professionals, relevant to the needs of industry and have been supported by ScreenSkills and the Mayor of London.

Drawing on film and television experience, it helps clients/A learners identify and plan around their needs for specific skills. Building a network of connections, it creates direct employment routes, addresses the current skills gap and offers ongoing pastoral support to learners.

All Spring Media delivers holistic training that focuses on gaining skills rather than ticking boxes. Its approach to training is one of benefiting the learner to create an engaging learning environment.

It hosts a range of production and non-production apprentices on-site. Some current and recently completed apprenticeships include:

- Junior Content Producer, Level 3
- Public Relations and Communications, Level 4
- Broadcast Production Assistant, Level 3
- Media Production Coordinator, Level 4
- Assistant Accountant, Level 3

All Spring Media also hosts one of the current pilot apprentices from the 'flexi-apprenticeship' where the apprentices have multiple placements with different employers throughout the course of the programme run by the same umbrella agency: ScreenSkills.

All Spring Media is active in the formation of various creative industries apprenticeship occupations such as Media Production Coordinator (Level 4).

METHODS

This report is based on the findings of a systematic review of academic literature, policy documents and commissioned reports on apprenticeships, particularly those with a consideration of diversity and inclusion. A systematic approach has been applied in previous research conducted by the research team working for the All-Party Parliamentary Group (APPG) for Creative Diversity (see Wreyford et al., 2021). It is intended as an effective way to scope out and review a large amount of existing research at the same time as reducing bias in the expertise and experience of the research team.

As apprenticeships in the creative economy is not a very well-established area of research, unlike widening participation or internships, the research team adopted a broad search strategy. To conduct a systematic review of the literature, the research team entered particular words into the search engines of Google Scholar, Scopus (Elsevier's abstract and citation database of peer-reviewed literature) and Browzine, the academic journal repository of the University of the Arts London.

A number of relevant terms were entered: 'apprenticeship' and then additional terms such as 'impact', 'access', 'UK', 'employment', 'diversity', 'education', 'culture' and 'creativity'. Separate searches were made for 'apprenticeship' and 'diversity' with terms relating to particular creative industries, such as film, TV, radio and photography, advertising and marketing, book

publishing, music, performing arts, visual arts, fashion and design.

The initial searches produced many results (see Appendix 6.1), and so limitations were added to the results such as date of publication (since 2000) and results where the search terms appeared in the title. For all of these, the abstracts were read and any that were not relevant were discarded. Where a document seemed particularly pertinent, we also considered the references, applying the same criteria as before but looking in particular for areas where the research team identified a paucity of evidence under consideration or to go to the source for information felt to be key.

The team arrived at a final list of 95 relevant papers and documents after removing duplicates and adding recommendations from the roundtables and the research team. This is the literature that has been used to compile this report.

The report has been further developed following a series of roundtable discussions with representatives from across the creative, cultural and wider industries and a series of submissions through the public consultation into the question of 'What Works' to improve equity, diversity and inclusion in creative education. Throughout this report, case studies are included from some of those who provided evidence. In many cases, they also give a voice to the lived experiences of those from underrepresented groups and ensure that the recommendations are rooted in the specific concerns of the creative sector itself. These are included as examples of effective practice and to illustrate innovative ways to implement the recommendations suggested by this report.



CASE STUDY: ROYAL SHAKESPEARE COMPANY

The Royal Shakespeare Company (RSC) apprenticeships programme currently offers Level 2, Level 3 and Level 5 qualifications for people interested in work-based routes into theatre. There are 12 apprentices currently employed by the company, building towards 28 apprenticeship roles in 2024. The programme is a key part of the RSC's ambition to attract young people from underrepresented groups into theatre jobs.

The RSC's current apprentices work in operations, automation, learning and front of house. Previous apprentices have worked in carpentry, props and scenic engineering.

The apprentices are employed directly by RSC and work in-house for approximately 80 per cent of their time. The other 20 per cent is allocated for work towards their qualifications with colleges in the Midlands and Chichester. They are paid national living wage, rather than the lower apprenticeship wage. This has been an important step in encouraging applications from young people from low-income backgrounds.

The RSC's Jacqui O'Hanlon told the APPG that one of the crucial elements of an effective apprenticeship programme has been developing the pipeline into those opportunities, particularly in terms of young people from backgrounds currently underrepresented in the creative industries. The key mechanism the RSC uses is its long-term partnerships with schools, colleges and regional theatres in areas of structural disadvantage. Called the Associate Schools Programme, the network is built around the principle of schools working in place-based partnerships. The RSC currently have partnerships with 250 schools and colleges in 25 towns and cities across England, from Cornwall to Middlesbrough. Opportunities inside and outside the classroom are co-created. The programme includes teacher professional development, talent and skills development, youth leadership development and co-producing festivals of work made by and with young people.

Through those partnerships, the RSC has also developed a pre-apprenticeship programme called Next Generation. Next Generation has three parts: Act, Backstage and Direct. Each element provides fully funded opportunities for young people from backgrounds underrepresented in the cultural sector to undertake work experience in a whole range of different departments and disciplines, both at the RSC and in their local regional theatre. The programme formally starts at age 13 and 100 young people each year participate in the programme. Young people aged 17 and 18 will also be supported in their applications and interviews for apprenticeship roles, both at the RSC and with other organisations. The RSC will track the progress and progression of Next Generation participants into paid training and employment.

The RSC has a working group made up of managers and apprentices from across the company to review progress and make adjustments to the programme. The voices of young people currently undertaking apprentice roles and those who have graduated into full-time employment are key to ensuring the

company learns and develops its approach.

"I'm a big advocate for apprenticeships. I think that university works for some people but [through apprenticeships]... you get the best of everything: you get the education, you get the paperwork behind you, you get the technical skills, the practical skills and just general experience, which I think is worth its weight in gold in the future." – Jack, scenic engineer and former apprentice at the RSC

"I didn't think I'd get this apprenticeship because I didn't have the experience. But I just said: 'I need someone to teach me from the ground up', and they were willing to give me the opportunity to learn." – Kate, the RSC's first female automation apprentice

QUALITY AND THE DEFICIT MODEL

Throughout the literature and policy interventions is a fundamental struggle to give apprenticeships parity of status with higher education and degrees. As we have seen in our analysis of UCAS, HESA and Census data, degrees dominate educational routes into the creative sector.

These ongoing issues manifest in two ways. First is the issue of quality in the context of apprenticeships. Second is the problem of a 'deficit' model implicit in much of the possible 'What Works' advice.

Almost every analysis of current apprenticeship policy raises issues of quality. Again, this is not a new issue. In 2004, the then Department for Education and Skills found modern apprenticeships and work-based learning were seen as second-class options compared to traditional degree and graduate employment routes. This has continued to the present.

Policy voices, for example, the APPG on Apprenticeships (2021), along with Select Committees in the Houses of Lords (2023) and Commons (2018), have all called for more to be done on the status of apprenticeships. Research (e.g. Murphy and Jones, 2021; Learning and Skills Council, 2009; Learning and Work Institute, 2017; Cavaglia et al, 2022; Fuller and Unwin, 2017; Mutlib, 2020; Ryan and Lőrinc, 2018; The Skills Commission, 2018; and Speckesser and Xu, 2022) concurs, with status and parity of esteem with degrees a dominant theme.

Apprenticeship programmes in England are often perceived as less desirable than staying in full-time education (Fuller and Unwin, 2007). Many potential apprentices must negotiate feelings of 'being looked down on', i.e. not being worth as much as a degree holder or seen as working as hard (Ryan and Lőrinc, 2018). Schools are under intense pressure to encourage pupils to continue in education and this is reflected in careers advice and parental disapproval of apprenticeships as a worthwhile option (Skills Commission, 2018).

The issue of the status of apprenticeships in comparison to degrees impacts both who is likely to become an apprentice as well as the quality of the courses themselves. Subsequent sections have a 'deep dive' on degree apprenticeships, but in general, research has raised questions about the impact of this lower status on course quality.

St Martin's Group (2022), based on survey work with apprenticeships, confirmed DfE's (2021b) statistics on dropout and completion rates. They also found apprentices did not feel well informed about their programmes or their assessments prior to starting courses.

These findings echoed 2017 research from the Learning and Work Institute on issues of quality, lack of advancement or additionality in terms of skills, and the levels of apprenticeships being taken up. Fuller et al. (2017) also found issues with progression and links between levels, in addition to concerns about diversity and the skew of funding towards London and the Southeast of England.

Second, most initiatives to address inequalities have been based on a deficit model, where it is assumed that introducing steps to help potential candidates with awareness or applying for apprenticeships will provide the solution. Little consideration has been given to what changes might be needed by the educational providers or the employers. In this way – as has been thoroughly discussed in the literature on employment and inequality of opportunity – the problem is individualised and seen to be the responsibility of the underrepresented groups themselves to adapt and learn.

Chadderton and Wischmann (2014) go even further and argue that there are assumptions of 'cultural deficiency', where those from disadvantaged demographics, for example, are assumed to lack the necessary social and cultural capital, and that their

skills and abilities may be judged subjectively as different and therefore less valuable. Rathbone Training in Newcastle suggests helping both individuals and employers to recognise the skills and networks that a diverse range of candidates could bring to the workplace (Skills Commission, 2018).

The Skills Commission (2018) found that employers were willing to “be flexible on entry criteria...as long as the person has the right attitude and desire to learn”. However, this is not something that is widely communicated to potential applicants. Ryan and Lórinč (2018) have pointed out that policymakers tend to view young people as able to make the ‘right’ choices when given the right information but that structural factors have not been taken sufficiently into account.A

As we demonstrated with our analysis of widening participation for higher education, these approaches will not work to address the systematic issues facing diversity in the creative economy. **To properly reform vocational routes into creative work, and indeed work in general, apprenticeship policy must move away from assuming the failures of policy are the fault of individual deficits, rather than the ongoing lesser status of apprentice education.**

LESSONS FROM OTHER SECTORS OF THE ECONOMY

Notwithstanding our caveats about the lack of a ‘What Works’ approach to diversity and apprenticeships, there is a reasonable consensus across the literature.

From the international comparative work, we see a high-level policy suggestion: in a 2022 assessment of the impact of the pandemic on Europe’s apprenticeship systems, CEDEFOP (2022) noted how most European nations have a clear vision for the purpose and role of apprenticeships policy. In the creative economy context, it is clear this vision has yet to be realised by any of the constituent nations in the British system.

Germany’s approach to apprenticeships is widely regarded as the ‘gold standard’ in Europe (Campbell et al., 2011). It allows transferability between employers, due to several factors, including the stability of the training schemes, shared recognition of skills developed during the apprenticeship and the involvement of trade unions and other occupational associations to agree

pay scales and professional status for final awards. As a result, Germany’s apprenticeships have a relatively high status compared to purely academic options (Chadderton and Wischmann, 2014).

In the English context, apprenticeships can be challenging for employers. Getting recruitment right, ensuring retention and completion, organising work culture to support the learning and assessment elements of an apprenticeship, and the need for high-quality mentoring are all areas that demand employer commitment (Rowe et al, 2017).

Moreover, managing the time off the job for the academic elements; the mismatch between employer needs and the standards (and qualified tutors) to meet those needs; employer misconceptions and stigma about the quality of apprenticeship programmes; and the need to be flexible for older and more senior level staff taking apprenticeships are all additional challenges from the employers’ perspective (Murphy and Jones, 2021).

To meet these challenges, successful and effective apprenticeships are strongly associated with a sustained organisational commitment (Fuller and Unwin, 2007). This takes several forms.

For recruitment:

Well-designed recruitment campaigns, policies and practices, and dedicated personnel to monitor the progress and welfare of apprentices (Fuller and Unwin, 2007), are essential.

An early report commissioned by the National Apprenticeship Service to improve racial and gender inequities provides two successful case studies for advertising and recruitment. Adverts were placed in women’s magazines to encourage women to apply for technical apprenticeships and in working men’s clubs to attract men into childcare (Marangozov et al., 2009).

Early intervention matters. Pre-apprenticeship funding for relevant qualifications (e.g. driving licences) as well as general financial support at the start of programmes can be effective in supporting recruitment (Murphy and Jones, 2021; APPG on Apprenticeships, 2021). Financial support sits alongside partnerships with schools and the use of ambassadors and role models to make clear the types of support that are available on entry (Murphy and Jones, 2021; APPG on Apprenticeships, 2021; St Martin’s Group, 2022). This can also be effective when targeting potential apprentices already on staff payrolls.

However, questions of status and parity of esteem are never far from apprenticeships policy. Advertising using data on pay progression, promotion and education or training outcomes, as well as dispelling myths about pay rates, can help to attract potential apprentices (Murphy and Jones, 2021; St Martin's Group, 2022). In turn, this may help raise awareness of apprenticeships as a positive alternative to degrees (APPG on Apprenticeships, 2021), which is a general issue for apprenticeships policy.

For entry and retention:

The literature repeatedly refers to the creation of a support structure and mentoring relationships as key to increasing the number and success of apprentices from under-represented groups (for example, Hansberry and Gerhardt, 2023; Newton and Williams, 2013).

Mentoring and support structures can include direct support, particularly one-to-one meetings between apprentices and managers, as an important element of retention strategy (St Martin's Group, 2022). Line managers can support apprentices during the programme through regular catch-ups to review progress and identify any issues, including ensuring that the workplace culture is supportive of apprentice needs (Murphy and Jones, 2021). Better connections and ongoing communication between the employer and provider ensure that support that is agreed at the beginning of the apprenticeship is maintained for the duration of the apprenticeship and not just in the early months. These agreements also involve upfront information about content, tasks, timescales, workplace responsibilities and how to access support, as well as how the minimum 20 per cent off-the-job training will be protected and managed.

Financial support was also identified as important for some groups, in particular younger respondents and those who did not already work for their employer. This may involve increases to the apprentice minimum wage, particularly if financial issues place apprentices at risk of not achieving.

The risks of dropping out of courses are also related to the need for formal pastoral care, particularly from training providers, and employer commitments to protect time off for learning and study.

Cross-European research suggests training for company mentors, with a specific focus on senior staff's time for preparing and providing training, as well as proper recognition and compensation, can be effective (CEDEFOP, 2022). This links to the general importance of role models – for example, apprentices seeing mentors who have themselves completed an apprenticeship (St Martin's Group, 2022).

Tasters or trial periods have had proven results for apprentices from minorities (Newton and Williams, 2013). The same paper also recommends working with employers to reduce bias in recruitment and ensure working conditions are equitable by having cultural competence around such things as dress codes and religious requirements. More generally, Murphy and Jones (2021) suggest more guidance to help employers engage with a more diverse workforce, who in turn may become more diverse apprentices.

Similar themes were found in a study on degree apprenticeships. Rowe et al. (2017) identified the need for recruitment to be steered by trained and experienced HR professionals or senior managers; regular contacts between higher education staff and businesses to develop buy-in from both sides of provision, as well as to develop ownership by senior staff; time and resources to be devoted to making sure apprentices feel part of both elements of provision; and the need for quality mentoring from both academic and employer mentors. These common factors are worth noting as they bridge to 'What Works' questions for higher education and apprenticeship policy.



CASE STUDY: RESOURCE PRODUCTIONS CIC

A model for 'What Works' is the media production and training CIC Resource Productions. Based in Slough, it balances commercial production with opportunities for apprentices. It is now an Arts Council England National Portfolio Organisation.

Five of its 11 staff members are currently undertaking or have completed apprenticeships. As a commercial need arises, Resource Productions will build a job description, design the role with a learning provider and then advertise for the post. Each position arises from a targeted skills need and with some secured project funding to cover the wages.

CEO Dominique Unsworth told the Creative Diversity APPG that: *“Resource Productions has been involved in creating a lot of apprenticeship standards – Production Assistant Screen and Audio Level 3 which has been very useful for our own company development but also as a pathway in for those not wanting to continue education particularly around the 17–19 age group.*

I’ve seen that on the ground apprenticeships are brilliant. People staying in the company for 10 years and going through 3 or 4 apprenticeships through that time. Coming out with a degree. That has worked very well for us. I do not see how any other company would not want to utilise that great pathway.

It is striking that apprenticeships completed by staff are mostly in the business, administration and law pathways. This reflects some of the challenges for creative apprenticeships that this paper discusses.

Siobhan White’s journey

Siobhan started studying child nursing at university in 2013. She realised she wanted to pursue a career in performing arts and volunteered with organisations in Slough to build her creative performance experience.

While volunteering, it was suggested she apply for a Level 3 apprenticeship in community arts. After 12 months of working and studying, she was offered a full-time position by Resource Productions, the company providing her apprenticeship.

The initial apprenticeship gave Siobhan insights into the practical workings of the creative industries. It also gave her confidence and empowered her as a performer.

Siobhan is currently completing her Level 5 Operations and Departmental Manager on the Business, Administration and Law Pathway. She believes that creative businesses can also benefit from formal business planning, management and learning.

Siobhan believes firmly that apprenticeships do equalise opportunity for learners from working-class origins. The battle is now to convince parents, teachers and career advisors that apprenticeships are a viable path to success in the creative industries.



THE CHALLENGE OF DEGREE APPRENTICESHIPS

What are degree apprenticeships?

“A degree apprenticeship is a combination of work and higher-level learning, with a programme developed by employers, universities and professional bodies in partnership. The apprentice is in employment throughout but must spend 20 per cent of their time undertaking study or training, either on a day-to-day basis or in blocks. This study goes towards an undergraduate or postgraduate degree as part of the apprenticeship, accredited by the relevant higher education institution. They generally take between two and six years to complete. Unlike traditional degrees, there are no tuition fees for apprentices, and apprentices are paid by their employer throughout.” (Cullinane and Doherty, 2020)

Cullinane and Doherty (2020) also suggest the importance of differentiating between degree-level apprenticeships, which are Level 6 and 7 apprenticeships, and the specific degree apprenticeship that comes with a degree qualification awarded by a higher education provider.

The major point of intersection between higher education and the apprenticeship system is the degree apprenticeship.

The two policy aims for degree apprenticeships are to increase social mobility across employment and address growing skills gaps in the UK economy (OfS, 2019). Degree apprenticeships are designed to be employer-led with assessment standards set by ‘trailblazer’ groups from the industry or profession associated with the course.

Degree apprenticeships are a relatively new part of the apprenticeship system (Smith et al., 2021). As a result, there is a lack of longitudinal data to make any robust claims about long-term impact. There is also little formal ‘What Works’ material in the policy and academic literature we have analysed.

The need for partnerships between employers and higher education, particularly on assessment standards, is both a challenge and an opportunity (Crawford-Lee, 2020; Qew-Jones and Rowe, 2022). The shift to higher-level apprenticeships following the introduction of the Apprenticeship Levy (Cullinane and Doherty, 2020) has created new demand

for work-based learning within higher education. At the same time, much more needs to be done to create cohesive and standardised benchmarking on how to deliver and assess degree apprenticeships (Quew-Jones and Rowe, 2022).

These pedagogical questions are one part of the literature on degree apprenticeships. The initial evaluations, both academic and policy, show mixed results for both social mobility and addressing skills gaps. Indeed, there may be a tension between fulfilling these two aims of increased social mobility and addressing skills gaps in the context of an employer-driven learning model (Engineering Professors Council, 2018).

Much of the research on degree apprenticeships and social mobility has been highly critical. Casey and Wakeling (2022), assessing degree apprenticeships for solicitors, found most degree apprentices were from middle-class backgrounds. By contrast, candidates with lower socio-economic status retained a preference for the traditional degree route into a law career. This is one illustration of the ongoing issues over parity of esteem, even where the qualification is supposed to be of the same status as a university degree.

The issue of parity of esteem is acute in the context of racial inequalities. Multib's (2020) paper, drawing on the experiences of the BAME Apprenticeship Alliance in Birmingham, found a strong preference for traditional degree routes within the British Asian community. This again suggests degree apprenticeships are struggling to convince potentially diverse cohorts of their value via-a-vis higher education degrees.

On broader questions of social mobility, Cullinane and Doherty (2020) are particularly critical of the early years of degree apprenticeships. By 2020, degree apprenticeships were dominated by senior leadership and management training, taken by older workers. Only 13 per cent of degree apprentices were from the most deprived areas, with 27 per cent from the most advantaged, a pattern that was the opposite of those undertaking the lowest-level apprenticeships. This picture, up to 2020 at least, was getting worse over time. Indeed, this is true of apprentice policy in general (Cavaglia et al., 2022).

If degree apprenticeships struggle to meet social mobility goals, what are the positive impacts of the policy, and where can improvements be made?

The Sutton Trust is unequivocal: "High-level apprenticeships

have labour market outcomes comparable to degrees from Russell Group universities and have the potential to address skills gaps in the UK economy" (Cullinane and Doherty, 2020).

Degree apprenticeships are certainly working for *specific* graduates in *specific* sectors. Computing, for example, sees high levels of pay and career advancement for degree apprenticeship graduates (Nawaz et al., 2022). In the same study, Nawaz found employers supportive of degree apprenticeships for growing talent, bringing new knowledge and encouraging career progression in their organisations.

Where specific institutions, such as Manchester Metropolitan University (2021), offered case study material to Nawaz's study, degree apprenticeship graduates are completing degrees with high marks (96 per cent of the 2020-21 cohort achieved a merit or distinction).

However, the subject of the degree apprenticeship is important in shaping outcomes (Cullinane and Doherty, 2020; Nawaz et al., 2022). Much as with the rest of the economy, and reflecting long-standing issues with apprenticeships policy (Campbell et al., 2005; Hogarth et al., 2012), different types of degree apprenticeships taken by men and women reflect the gendering of work and occupations (Fuller et al., 2017; Nawaz et al., 2022).

Critics and advocates agree degree apprenticeships are a crucial mechanism in developing parity of esteem between academic degrees and vocational education (e.g., House of Commons, 2018; Mutlib, 2020; Crawford-Lee, 2020; Cullinane and Doherty, 2020). As such, they should be seen as a potential part of 'What Works' in the context of the apprenticeships route into CCIs.

Where there have been ideas for developments and improvements, we see some consensus (House of Commons, 2018; Mutlib, 2020; Crawford-Lee, 2020; Cullinane and Doherty, 2020; Smith et al., 2021; Nawaz et al., 2022; Quew-Jones and Rowe, 2022).

Work must be done with employers. Cullinane and Doherty (2020) found one-third of employers surveyed felt the degree apprenticeship might not fit with their staffing needs. Even where employers were receptive, they worried about financial costs and the potentially complex processes and challenges for the approval of appropriate standards.

Mutlib (2020), although not directly a 'What Works' study, offered several ideas common to the literature. The BAME Apprenticeship Alliance in Birmingham used outreach in schools and employer roadshows, role models, ambassadors, champions and awards – for example, the winners of The Asian Apprenticeship Awards were given speaking and events opportunities as role models for degree apprenticeships. The programme sought apprentice-led solutions, too (for example, how to address recruitment and status issues) and used regional-level, as well as single, higher education institution and employer partnerships.

There are similarities with widening participation agendas, with The Sutton Trust making a direct connection to degree apprenticeships. To improve social mobility, widening participation data for degree apprenticeships should be published in an accessible format; contextual admissions, from both universities and employers, are essential to broaden access; levy funds should be used to support access; applications should be clearer, with a 'national portal' containing information and direct applications; and schools need to improve careers advice to cover degree apprenticeships (Cullinane and Doherty, 2020).

The need for improved careers advice is especially important in the context of criticisms of careers advice in schools, particularly for creative work (House of Lords, 2023). Although somewhat beyond the scope of this research project, it is important to note that key creative organisations, such as the British Film Institute (BFI), see poor and under-resourced careers advice as a significant part of "what's stopping young people from pursuing careers in the screen industries" (BFI, 2022).A

Addressing issues of status and parity of esteem sits at the intersection of the diversity and social mobility literature. Understanding the specific ways degrees are given status across diverse and differing communities is the first task for a successful degree apprenticeship policy (Mutlib, 2020). As with the widening participation literature, policy should be wary of seeing a lack of interest in, or uptake of, degree apprenticeships as a failure or deficit to be corrected for individuals or communities.

One way to address the status of the degree apprenticeship is to address which institutions are offering them. Both Cullinane and Doherty (2020) and Crawford-Lee (2020), although writing from very different perspectives on the implementation of

degree apprenticeships, agree on the need for growth in the offer. This is both in terms of subjects and areas of the economy and in terms of which higher education institutions, particularly those in the Russell Group, are offering degree apprenticeships. **If Russell Group institutions are to expand their offer, even more consideration will have to be given to the widening participation agenda** (Cullinane and Doherty, 2020).

There was, sadly, little on creative degree apprenticeships. This is partially because there are so few programmes.

In 2018–19, The Sutton Trust found no CCI degree apprenticeships in the six approved degree apprenticeships and the five degree-level apprentices. By July 2023, IfATE's website listed two integrated degrees – Broadcast and Media Systems Engineer (Level 6) and Outside Broadcasting Engineer (Level 7). These sat alongside three Level 7, non-integrated degrees of Historic Environment Advisor, Archaeological Specialist and Cultural Heritage Conservator.

Unfortunately, Outside Broadcasting Engineer and Historic Environment Advisor had no training provider and no apprenticeships on offer. Cultural Heritage Conservator (University of Lincoln) and Archaeological Specialist (Trinity Saint David) each had one training provider but no current vacancies.

Broadcast and Media Systems Engineer has two providers, Birmingham City University and Ravensbourne University London, but only one current vacancy listed. Looking at the list of vacancies covered by DfE data suggests 16 adverts for 32 individual vacancies for this degree and degree-level apprenticeship since 2018. As with our case study of journalism at Level 5, it is difficult to see these higher-level apprenticeships addressing diversity issues in the media industry when there are so few opportunities to access them.

The offer of degree apprenticeships for specialist roles in creative occupations is, at best, extremely limited. This is reflected in the lack of research. Riley (2021) explored the receptiveness of creative SMEs to degree apprenticeships and found all the same issues that confront apprenticeships policy and CCIs in general. In addition, the trailblazer model of standard setting was not well disseminated in the context of the creative SMEs engaged in Riley's (2021) study.

Degree apprenticeships sit at the intersection of apprenticeships policy and higher education policy. As such, they

face a dual set of problems, both in terms of providing access for diverse and socially mobile individuals and in terms of addressing the unique needs of work and organisations in the creative economy.

Yet degree apprenticeships really could be transformative in the context of creative occupations. They offer potential parity of esteem with degrees; their assessments and standards are designed to reflect employers' needs; and they build on higher education institution's support for work-based learning. Most crucially, they could address the creative sectors' demand for skills, experience and networks in a fairer and more transparent way than is present in current, often closed and informal, hiring practices.

So much more could be done to develop creative degree apprenticeships. As *Creative Majority* (Wreyford et al., 2021) demonstrated, no one single policy can solve the diversity crisis in the creative sector. If degree apprenticeships are to play a role in transforming the sector, they will need to be developed in the context of wider recommendations for policy reform of the entire apprenticeship system.

CONCLUSIONS

In the current labour market, and particularly in the creative economy, there is so much competition for graduate roles that a degree is no longer sufficient to secure work. Ryan and Lőrinc (2018) discuss how young people are expected to distinguish themselves through unpaid internships that widen inequalities (as seen in our paper on work-integrated learning). The creative sector's culture of interning and unpaid work in the creative economy may be undermining the potential for apprenticeships (Marangazov et al., 2009).

Apprenticeships have the potential to provide candidates who lack access to nepotistic networks or embodied competencies and confidence in cultural fields with the means to gain skills and experience that are recognised and valued by employers. However, in their current form, apprenticeships are not providing this opportunity for social mobility.

Apprenticeship programmes in England are often perceived as less desirable than staying in full-time education (Fuller and

Unwin, 2007). Many potential apprentices must negotiate feelings of 'being looked down on', i.e. not being worth as much as a degree holder or seen as working as hard (Ryan and Lőrinc, 2018). Schools are under intense pressure to encourage pupils to continue in education and this is reflected in careers advice and parental disapproval of apprenticeships as a worthwhile option (Skills Commission, 2018).

It is unsurprising, therefore, that where we have been able to synthesise 'What Works' insights from the limited policy and research base, we see echoes of 'What Works' for widening participation. For example, to support greater social mobility, Fuller et al (2017), House of Commons (2018), Doherty and Cullinane (2020), Learning and Work Institute (2017), Cullinane and Doherty (2020) and House of Lords (2023) all stress the need for better careers advice, giving young people a full, transparent and equal sense of the possible routes into a range of careers. This focus on careers advice connects directly to the government's Creative Careers programme (2020-2023).

Beyond the generic needs for more funding, better information and higher quality courses, the creative economy offers unique policy challenges. These challenges are matched by unique policy opportunities.

The current system is, as both policy reports and industry evaluations show, not fit for purpose. At best, the system is not providing the necessary courses, at the necessary levels, with the necessary flexibility. At worst, we see whole areas of the apprenticeship system where there is simply no provision at all.

At the same time, the quest for parity of esteem and equal status between vocational routes and higher education could be the basis for major policy innovation.

First, the government must rethink apprentices for the creative occupations. They need a bespoke programme that begins from the reality of working practices and employer needs. DCMS and DfE should convene a taskforce, with employers, unions and freelancer representatives, to reimagine apprenticeship policy for the sector.

Second, there is the chance for a major information and publicity campaign to change industry perceptions of creative apprenticeships. Information and awareness raising is recommended across the general literature on apprenticeships. It applies to the creative sector, too.

Third, any information and awareness-raising campaign could provide the route to bringing in both employers and potential training providers to develop new standards and a new offer. In particular, ‘trailblazers’ for higher-level apprenticeships are vitally important. This need is acute given the Apprenticeship Levy funding that is increasingly focused on higher-level apprenticeships for older, mid-career workers.

Fourth, degree apprenticeships can be a route to directly support mid-career creatives in developing leadership and management skills, recognised by a formal qualification. At the same time, those re-entering the creative sector, for example, after career breaks or family leave, could be formally supported by the degree apprenticeship system.

The impact of a formal degree apprenticeship qualification in a sector where employment is often driven by personal networks is uncertain. Given the extremely high level of degree-holding in the creative workforce, it is clear that lower-level apprenticeships will be unlikely to diversify the sector on their own. A degree-level apprenticeship may, if developed and supported properly, offer similar status to the under- and postgraduate qualifications that are now so dominant.

Fifth, it is vital any creative degree apprenticeship does not repeat the widening participation, nor the work-based learning, failures of the existing university system. Thus, the newly designed apprenticeship system must draw on the ‘What Works’ lessons of the previous sections of this report if it is to ever fulfil the promise of diversifying educational routes into creative work.

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APPENDIX

[Appendix 6.1: Search Results](#)

CONCLUSIONS AND POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS

The conclusions and policy recommendations emerging from this research report have been published in a separate document.

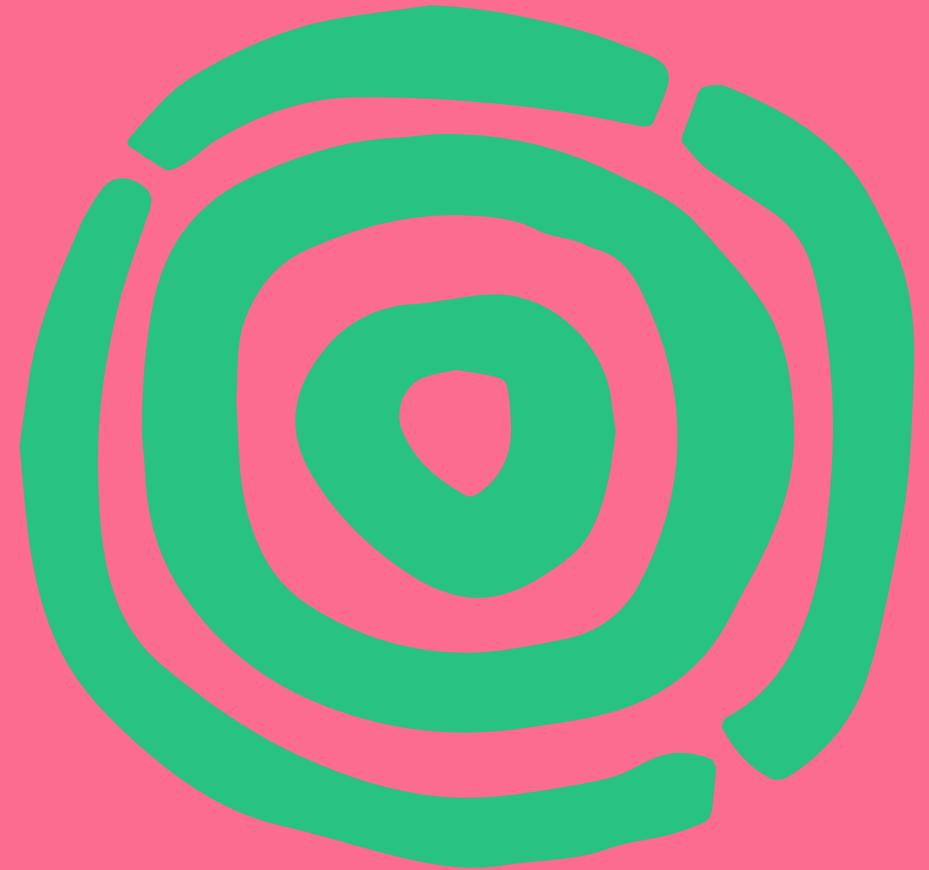
MAKING THE CREATIVE MAJORITY: Policy Recommendations 2023

A report for the All-Party Parliamentary Group for Creative Diversity on 'What Works' to support diversity and inclusion in creative education and the talent pipeline, with a focus on the 16+ age category.

OCTOBER 2023

Policy recommendations report authors: Roberta Comunian, Tamsyn Dent, Dave O'Brien and Natalie Wreyford

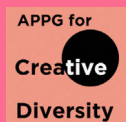
To read the Policy Recommendation report visit www.kcl.ac.uk/cultural/projects/creative-majority-education



The All-Party Parliamentary Group for Creative Diversity (APPG) was formed in May 2019 by Ed Vaizey MP (now Lord Vaizey). It was set up with the support of Alex Pleasants, formerly Ed Vaizey's senior policy adviser, and Joanna Abeyie MBE, leading diversity consultant and CEO of Blue Moon.

Its aim is to engage with industry and government to identify and tackle obstacles to equity, diversity and inclusion in the creative sector. Baroness Deborah Bull and Chi Onwurah MP are now co-chairs, giving the group prominent voices in both the House of Commons and the House of Lords. The group's vice-chairs and officers bring a further wealth of political and industry experience and include Baroness Floella Benjamin, Baroness Jane Bonham-Carter and Lord Ed Vaizey. Alex Pleasants and Joanna Abeyie MBE provide the secretariat for the group.

Professor Roberta Comunian, Dr Tamsyn Dent and Dr Natalie Wreyford from the Department of Culture, Media & Creative Industries, Faculty of Arts & Humanities, King's College London, alongside Professor Dave O'Brien from the Department of Art History and Cultural Practices, School of Arts, Languages and Cultures, University of Manchester constituted the core research team. They were supported by Tessa Read from Creative Shift, Academic Enhancement at University of the Arts London, Dr Mark Taylor from the Sheffield Methods Institute, University of Sheffield, Professor Sarah Jewell, University of Reading and post-doctoral researchers Dr Atif Ghani (University of the Arts London), Dr Ruth Brown, Dr Kate Shorvon, Scott Caizley, Aditya Polisetty and Yolanda Tong Wu (King's College London) and Dr Sonkurt Sen (University of Bonn).



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