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**Birmingham City University (BCU) and
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**APPRENTICESHIPS
IN THE CREATIVE
SECTOR**

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INTRODUCTION

Since 2015, the UK Government has introduced widespread reform of vocational education and training, placing employers in the driving seat of developing and delivering Apprenticeships.

This employer led apprenticeship system has required groups of employers (trailblazer groups) to come together to generate a number of documents for their approval: this approval culminating in the apprenticeship '**Occupational Standard**' and the '**End Point Assessment Plan (EPA)**'.

The occupational standards developed clearly set out what an apprentice will be doing (routinely by the end of their apprenticeship) in the occupation described (duties), and the **knowledge, skills, and behaviours (KSBs)** required by that occupational role.

The mandatory End Point Assessment is an independent assessment of the competences (KSBs) set out in the occupational standard. This is carried out by registered **Apprenticeship End Point Assessment Organisations (EPAOs)**, who train independent assessors in the methods set out in the EPA plan and ultimately make the decision on final apprenticeship achievement and grading for each and every apprentice.

The aims of the reform are to:

- drive up skills investment and productivity for UK businesses;
- enable employers to define the workforce competences (KSBs) they require at levels 2 to 7;
- support employers to attract, recruit, develop and retain their workforce, for those age 16 upwards;
- provide funding for the training and assessment of apprenticeships; and
- quality assure the provision of apprenticeship training and assessment.

In return, apprentices are trained to the competences set out in the occupational standard, at no cost to themselves, with **success defined** as passing the independent end point assessment process.

A note about the devolved nations: In Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland, skills and apprenticeship policy is devolved: that is the individual Governments determine the focus on apprenticeships, including sector and level, and set the requirements for apprenticeship 'frameworks'. For the most part, apprenticeship frameworks are managed by Government appointed standards setting bodies, with apprenticeships based on National Occupational Standards (NOS). These devolved nations do use part of the UK wide employer apprenticeship levy to fund their work and to support the training of apprentices.

This report focuses only on the English Apprenticeship System and Standards.

Governance of the English Apprenticeship System

The **Institute for Apprenticeships and Technical Education (IFATE)** was officially formed in 2017, and is responsible for the oversight of apprenticeships, and now technical and higher technical education, in England.

Employer (trailblazer) groups must work through IFATE in order to develop and maintain the quality of the apprenticeships available.

IFATE works in collaboration with **Ofsted, Ofqual** and the **Office for Students (OfS)** to ensure the quality of the apprenticeship training, the underpinning qualifications, and their end point assessment¹.

The **Education and Skills Funding Agency (ESFA)**, working with IFATE, determines the level of funding each occupational standard receives, with ESFA also responsible for the mechanisms by which employers and training providers can access apprenticeship funds and the auditing of these funds.

The combination of IFATE, ESFA, Ofsted, OfQual and OfS make up the **external quality assurance (EQA)** arrangements through which apprenticeship training providers and independent end point assessment organisations are regulated, assessed and monitored.

Employers and training providers who deliver apprenticeships directly (and indirectly through sub-contracting) are in scope for both Ofsted and ESFA inspection and must meet certain initial and ongoing requirements to be listed on ESFA's 'register of apprenticeship training providers'².

Apprenticeship Funding

The UK Government launched the Apprenticeship Levy in April 2017: this being a means to levy employers to directly fund all apprenticeships. Its further aims were to secure employers' direct commitment to the development and maintenance of apprenticeships as a means to addressing workforce development and delivering training in key areas on the longer term³.

The apprenticeship levy commits employers (with a salary bill of over £3million per annum) to pay 0.5% of their salary bill into a 'digital account' where it is held for up to 2 years⁴. In order to access these funds, employers must register for an **ESFA digital apprenticeship account**, and then place apprentices on programme via their choice of occupational standards using registered apprenticeship training providers. Registered apprenticeship training providers can be the employer themselves, or external training providers, such as colleges, universities or independent training providers. No matter what, those organisations must be registered with, and are subject to audit by both, the ESFA and Ofsted.

- **Levy paying employers** in return for placing apprentice on programme can access their funds for up to 2 years, with the Government topping up the costs of training by 10% (up to the maximum funding band allocated to the occupational standard(s) in use). If not used within the two-year period, these funds are returned to the public purse.

¹ Register of end-point assessment organisations - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk)

² Register of apprenticeship training providers - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk)

³ How to register and use the apprenticeship service as an employer - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk)

⁴ How to take on an apprentice - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk)

- **Non-levy paying employers** can also access funds from the ESFA, but they too must register for an ESFA digital apprenticeship account, where they are able to access funds. However, during the period April 2017 to March 2024, non-levy paying employers are only asked to commit a 5% contribution to the costs of apprenticeship training over the full duration of the apprenticeship, with Government (via the ESFA) supporting the additional 95% of training costs (up to the funding band allocated for the occupational standard). From April 2024, non-levy paying employers will now have apprenticeship training fully funded (to the funding band allocated to the individual occupation) for apprentices aged between 16 and 21 when they start their apprenticeship⁵.

The apprenticeship funds have the sole purpose of supporting the training and assessment elements of the apprenticeship; they cannot be used to recruit or employ the apprentice themselves.

Subject to successfully meeting all eligibility, employment and training provider initial checks, training providers are able to access and draw down funds via the digital apprenticeship account on a monthly basis for the duration of the training period (note: this is different to the full duration of the apprenticeship which includes the EPA period).

However, 20% of the funding is withheld in the digital account until an EPA grade is registered by the EPAO, which then releases this final amount to the training provider, who has also, in collaboration with the employer, negotiated a price for EPA within their contract.

The level of funding each occupational standard attracts from ESFA is capped to the funding band assigned to it (with the maximum funding band being £27,000).

At the outset, training providers agree a price for the training and EPA – with the aim to be less than the funding band for the occupation. Within the ESFA rules, training providers must carry out and evidence any recognition of prior learning (RPL), and the costs of the apprenticeship reduced accordingly.

Should the cost of the training exceed the funding band, the employer can be requested top up funding, but this has rarely been achieved.

The restrictions on the use of the apprenticeship levy are considerable, with employers and other organisations often voicing the need for greater flexibility. The Government has and is continually considering the manner in which the apprenticeship levy funds can be used to greater effect but remains resolute in the 2-year duration and the need for employers to commit to apprenticeship training.

However, recent years have seen some flexibility for levy paying employers. They have been offered two schemes to focus the use of their levy and/or apprenticeship funding, through:

- **Levy Transfers:** Levy paying employers could until March 2024, transfer up to 25% of their 'unused levy pot' to other employers via their digital accounts⁶, and could promote their commitment to the levy transfer scheme via a public pledge system⁷, where they can also specify location or subject areas they wish to support. From April 2024, levy paying employers can now transfer up to 50% of their unused funding to others, and for the first time, employers such as colleges and universities, can now train those apprentices⁸.
- **Flexi-Job Apprenticeships:** Employers, in sectors where short-term contracts or other non-standard employment models are the norm, can access apprenticeships by agreeing to place an apprentice on programme with other employers (in effect a shared apprenticeship), and thereby ensuring the apprentice can meet the full requirements of the occupational standard and sit the EPA⁹.

⁵ Apprenticeship funding - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk)

⁶ Transferring your apprenticeship levy to another business - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk)

⁷ Search funding opportunities (manage-apprenticeships.service.gov.uk)

⁸ Apprenticeship funding - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk)

⁹ Flexi-Job Apprenticeships - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk)

With these schemes now completing their initial pilots, we are expecting to see how effective and sustainable these schemes have been, how they might be improved to address the challenges identified, and how they might be expanded to meet further demand. As yet, there is little public data on the pilot programmes to report. However, anecdotal evidence suggests work is needed to promote the schemes, and to address the long-term viability of the programmes, and financial support is required for those operating the schemes to make them commonplace.

With a new Labour Government elected in July 2024, the apprenticeship levy will be subject to review. In the King's speech [reference needed], the transition to a 'Growth and Skills Levy' was confirmed, with employers enabled to support wider training, but with at least 50% of the levy used to support apprenticeships.

It remains to be seen how the new 'Skills England' body set to be responsible for training and the use of the levy will determine the skills that industry needs, but they will reflect on the employer voice, as well as regional and local skills plans. It yet remains unclear if employers will be asked to pay more into the levy, or if the current £3million salary bill figure will be altered, to cover the other skills training needed. No matter the Government in power, there remains a commitment to apprenticeships.

Apprenticeship Training and End Point Assessment

Apprenticeship training can only be offered by those training providers registered on the ESFA's Apprenticeship Provider and Assessment Register (APAR)¹⁰, formerly known as the Register of Apprenticeship Training Provider (RoATP). All apprenticeship training providers are subject to Ofsted inspection and ESFA funding audits; monthly reporting to the ESFA is an essential part of apprenticeship compliance, as are meeting and reporting against Ofsted criteria.

Apprenticeship training must be delivered across the entire apprenticeship to meet the KSBs stated, and at a rate of no less than '20% off the job' for a minimum of 12 months:

- This equates to a minimum of 6 hours per week for 46.4 weeks across a full year;
- The 20% off the job requirement must be extended to cover the entire training period duration, for example, from 12 months through to 60 months depending on the occupation;
- The 20% off the job can be delivered in any matter, so long as new learning is accounted for and documented each and every 4 weeks.

At the end of the training period, a mandatory End Point Assessment (EPA) must be completed by the apprentice. The apprentice must be employed during the training and EPA periods and given the time to complete the apprenticeship in full.

Each occupational standard has its own distinct EPA plan which details how the final holistic assessment of competence (the Knowledge, Skills, and Behaviour (KSBs) stated in the occupational standard) is to be assessed and graded through independent means. Access to the EPA 'gateway' is a negotiation with the apprentice, training providers, with the ultimate signatory being the employer, who then signs off the apprentice as ready for EPA.

The apprentice must then attempt the EPA, with the EPA organisation (EPAO) registering a grade on completion (typically pass, fail, merit or distinction).

This final stage is critical to releasing the 20% of funding that remains held in the digital account.

¹⁰ Apply to the APAR as an apprenticeship training provider - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk)



APPRENTICESHIPS PERFORMANCE:

A Summary

With 'employers in the driving seat', there has been a dramatic shift in the apprenticeship system away from traditional apprenticeship and low level (level 2 and 3) occupations where they had been used for 'entry' to the workplace, often for 'school leavers' or those seeking to 're-skill' often in trade areas.

Employers have demanded investment in higher level and professional apprenticeships, reflecting a significant opportunity to recruit and retain talent at a number of points, with a greater focus on lifelong learning and supporting the development of the workforce, with **not only a focus on new entrants, but as a means to develop a higher-skilled workforce.**

Prior to 2015, the vast majority of apprenticeships were at level 2 and 3, with only a very small number of apprenticeships at higher levels. There does remain an employer commitment to an apprenticeship route for younger people seeking employment for the first time, the vast majority of apprentice starts remaining at levels 2 and 3.

However, the ability to recruit and develop talent at higher levels and at an earlier than 'graduate' stage had been warmly embraced with many companies now changing their approach to recruitment in favour of a mixed economy of apprentices and graduates (ultimately meaning reduced graduate entry routes into the workplace).

Despite the network of regulatory bodies and complexities of apprenticeship policy and quality assurance, employers have, through IFATE, secured over 867 occupational standards, with 702 of these 'approved for delivery', and a further 42 in development and 11 at proposal stage¹¹ across the 15 industry routes.

Apprenticeship Data and Trends

Taking the ESFA published data, we can see the uptake and achievement of apprenticeship across all industry routes since 2017/18 where occupational standards exist¹².

ESFA's annual data states that since the 2018/19 academic year there have been 2,099,440 apprenticeship starts in total across all 15 industry routes.

In the creative and design sector, there have been a total of 9,110 starts of the same period, this representing 0.5% of all starts during this time period, with this remaining a consistent proportion of starts for each of those years.

¹¹ Apprenticeship search / Institute for Apprenticeships and Technical Education (correct as of 4th April 2024)

¹² Create your own tables, Table Tool - Explore education statistics - GOV.UK (explore-education-statistics.service.gov.uk)

If we look solely at ESFA's summary data for the most recent full academic year (August 2022 to July 2023), we can see key trends across all industry routes, with these being as follows:

ESFA's summary data for August 2022 to July 2023	
Starts by Funding Type	<p>68% [229,720] of apprenticeships were funded by Apprenticeship Service Account (ASA) levy funds, that is, apprenticeship levy paying employers</p> <p>Apprenticeships are now being routinely used by larger organisations who are seeking to maximise the use of their apprenticeship levy.</p> <p>Prior to the introduction of the apprenticeship levy, apprentices tended to be found small and medium sized employers.</p>
Starts by Level	<p>The 337,140 starts reported for the 2022/23 academic year are 3.5% lower than the 349,190 reported for 2021/22, but are higher than the 321,440 apprentice starts recorded in 2020/21.</p> <p>Of the 337,140 starts:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Higher apprenticeship (level 4+) starts reached their highest volume (112,930), representing over a third of all starts. • Higher apprenticeship starts have increased over time. These accounted for just 4.0% of starts (19,800) in 2014/15, rising to 19% (75,060) in 2018/19.
Starts by Age	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 23% of starts (77,720) were those in the under 19 age group • The share of starts for under 19s increased to 22.2% from 23% in the period 2021/22 to 2022/23. • 29% of starts (98,800) in the 19-24 age group, reduced from the 30.5% 2022/22 period • 47.6% of starts (160,620) in the 25 above age group (similar in the previous 2021/22 year) <p>Apprenticeships are routinely being used to attract new talent (those entering the workforce for the first time - under 24s), and to retain, train and progress existing staff.</p>
Average expected duration of apprenticeships	<p>Apprenticeships are increasing in duration from a decade ago. This is down to two key elements:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Apprenticeships at higher and professional levels take longer to achieve competence outcomes for new recruits • The occupational standards system now aims to support employers in ensuring quality outcomes. <p>There has been a shift away from a provider led system where providers offered a combination of a knowledge and NVQ qualification, which was often cited by employers as apprentices completing 'ticking boxes' as fast as possible rather than ensuring occupational competence.</p>
Apprenticeship achievements	<p>Out of 162,320 apprenticeship achievements in the 2022/23 academic year:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Intermediate (Level 2) and advanced (Level 3) apprenticeships together make up 115,830 or 71% of all achievements. <p>Higher and Degree level occupations tend to be longer in duration, and as such achievements are currently expected to be lower, with this increasing rapidly in the coming years as training periods come to an end.</p>

The performance of apprenticeships is now being scrutinised in greater detail by the Government via the Department for Education, who are looking to ensure value for money from the apprenticeship system. This approach means the following options are now being applied to apprenticeships across all 15 industry routes through route reviews:

- Reviewing and/or removing apprenticeships with no and low starts;
- Reducing the number of occupational standards, particularly where there is potential for the merging of standards to reduce overlap;
- Removing occupational standards where there is no longer an active trailblazer group to maintain the standards or to ensure compliance with current requirements;
- Reviewing and/or removing occupational standards where there are no, or likely to be no, end point assessment organisations in place;
- Reviewing apprenticeships with low levels of Qualification Achievement Rates (QAR), that is successful completion of the EPA, and in particular where the QAR is falling behind the ESFA's target of 67% completion rate; and
- Reviewing apprenticeships where funding is restricting uptake by training providers.

The Creative Route Review

For many industry sectors, 'route reviews' have been undertaken or are in action: these are being used to assess the apprenticeships in place in sectors before IFATE was formed, but also to identify where there are low numbers of apprentices on programme, and where improvements need to be made.

Of interest to BCU and UAL is IFATE's route review of the Creative and Design sector¹³: this was initially launched in 2019, but slowed during 2020 to enable employers to focus on the impacts of COVID-19, and reported its findings in late 2021, complete with an updated occupational map¹⁴ covering three distinct pathways:

- Craft and Design
- Cultural Heritage and Visitor Attractions
- Media, Broadcast and Production

In each of these pathways, occupational standards were considered where they existed, and if so, how they sat within the pathways and if there were opportunity to improve, merge or remove some occupations. The revised map also identifies a number of other occupations that may see the need to develop other occupational standards in the future.

February 2022 saw the outcomes of the review begin, with the removal of some occupations now achieved, revisions of older occupations underway, and the development and proposal of new occupations now taking shape.

Details on the occupations available at level 4 upwards in the Creative Sector are presented in Annex A, and further detail on individual standards at level 4 upwards in Annex B.

Based on the feedback gathered during the route review, IFATE initiated a formal review of occupations with '**Low and No Starts**' in autumn 2022, with regular update meetings taking place with employers and training providers to understand the challenges faced. IFATE reports that of the 56 standards in the creative route, 22 standards were in scope for this project, due to low or no starts.

¹³ *Creative and design - route review summary / Institute for Apprenticeships and Technical Education*

¹⁴ *Creative and design / Occupational Maps / Institute for Apprenticeships and Technical Education*

The project aimed to identify barriers to apprenticeship starts, and to present a key recommendations report to IFATE's Creative Route Panel¹⁵, which will identify routes to unblocking issues and generating more apprentice starts. The 'IFATE Low and No Starts in the Creative Sector Project' was expected to conclude, and report in Spring 2023.

For ease, IFATE's Creative and Design Route Panel members, as of April 2024, are:

- Kath Geraghty, Head of Workforce Development, National Theatre (Route Panel Chair)
- Vic Wade, Global Head of Training, DNEG (Route Panel Vice Chair)
- Phil Warnock, Director / Founder, Ginger Nut Media Ltd
- Emma Heslewood, Senior Museum Manager, Lancashire County Council
- Dominique Unsworth MBE, CEO, Producer and Trainer, Resource Production CIC
- Jon Winn, Technical Trainer, TAIT and Kinesys
- Michelle Mackay, Education Director, Bauer Academy
- Shona Marsh, Head of Design and Estimating, Cox London
- Robert Greer, Director, PAYE

Following IfATE's 'low and no starts in the creative sector' project, a policy paper was published in June 2023, titled: 'Creative Industries Sector Vision: A Summary of Key Actions'¹⁶ with 'Goal 2' focusing on 'Building a highly skilled, productive and inclusive workforce for the future, supporting 1 million more jobs across the UK'. Annex E presents the full detail proposed for Goal 2.

Of interest here to BCU and UAL are the points raised in relation to:

- Working collaboratively with industry and Government, to better understand the opportunities and challenges facing creative apprenticeships, and in particular SMEs, the quality of specialist training provision, the relevance of standards for creative apprenticeships and the effectiveness and sustainability of the Flexi Job model.
- Engagement of Government with industry, and in particular, with the findings from the BFI's Film and High-End TV Skills Review¹⁷, and the subsequent actions defined by the Screen sector Skills Task Force in November 2023¹⁸, which will include an agreed approach to ensuring an ambitious financial commitment is made by the industry towards training the existing and future workforce.
- The development in 2023 of 38 employer-led Local Skills Improvement Plans (LSIPs) to prioritise and reshape technical skills provision to better meet the needs of employers and the wider economy, complemented by £165 million of funding (until March 2025) to help colleges and other providers respond to the priorities identified in LSIPs including in the creative sector.
- The roll out of Higher Technical Qualifications (HTQs) to support creative and design industries with teaching starting from 2025.

However, there is little specific reference here to technical and professional apprenticeships, or degree apprenticeships, and the role of universities in supporting the development of a highly skilled workforce, and a workforce enabled to attract, recruit and retain talent via apprenticeships at these higher levels. This remains a gap in the skills policies and activities yet to be carried forward.

¹⁵ Route panels / Institute for Apprenticeships and Technical Education

¹⁶ Creative industries sector vision Annex A: summary of key actions - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk)

¹⁷ <https://www.bfi.org.uk/industry-data-insights/reports/bfi-skills-review-2022>

¹⁸ A Sustainable Future for Skills: the Report of the Screen Sectors Skills Task Force | BFI

APPRENTICESHIPS PERFORMANCE: THE CREATIVE SECTOR

Occupational Standards in the Creative Sector

As of April 2024, 53% of all occupational standards are at levels 2 and 3.

There has been a significant increase at higher technical levels, with 22% of occupational standards being at levels 4 and 5.

The biggest growth area in terms of number of occupational standards available is at levels 6 and 7, with 25% of the occupations being at these levels. However, this is not surprising as the former apprenticeship framework system stymied efforts to produce apprenticeships at these professional levels.

Occupational Standards	Approved for Delivery		In Development		At Proposal Stage	
	Across all 15 routes	Creative route	Across all 15 routes	Creative route	Across all 15 routes	Creative route
Level 2	137	3	5	0	0	0
Level 3	226	25	19	3	3	1
Level 4	111	10	2	0	6	0
Level 5	41	5	3	0	1	0
Level 6	106	4	9	3	0	0
Level 7	64	10	7	0	5	0
TOTAL (% of total)	685	57 (8%)	45	6 (13%)	15	1 (7%)

In the Creative Route, occupational standards similarly span levels 2 to 7:

- **Level 2 and 3:** 8% over overall total, but 49% of occupational standards in creative sector
- **Level 4 and 5:** 10% of overall total, and 26% of occupational standards in creative sector
- **Level 6 and 7:** 8% of overall total, and 25% of occupational standards in creative sector.

However, much of the focus on the development of apprenticeship occupational standards in the creative sector has remained at lower levels.

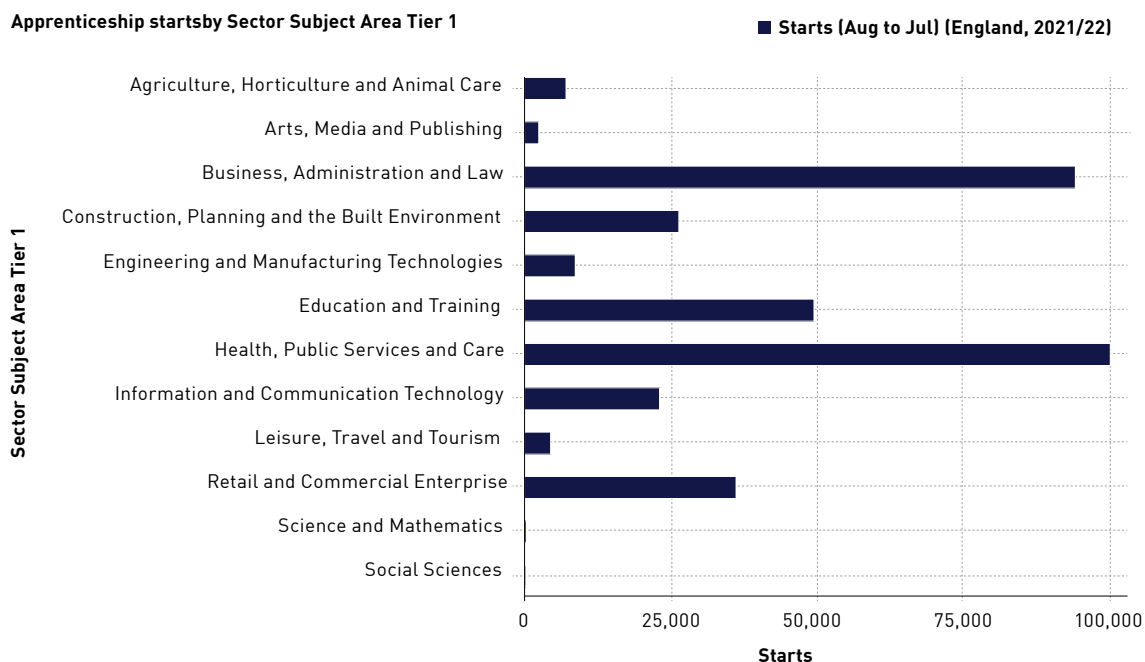
When considering the occupations at professional levels (levels 6 and 7), there is a favour towards postgraduate level apprenticeships (where typically candidates are likely to already had a degree or extensive senior experience) and very few level 6 or more specifically, 'degree apprenticeship' occupations.

Whilst further occupations are in development or at proposal stage (to increase the availability of occupations), in the creative sector these remain consistent with lower-level developments, but there is potential to bring forward some additional level 6 apprenticeships (although it remains to be seen if these will be degree apprenticeships).

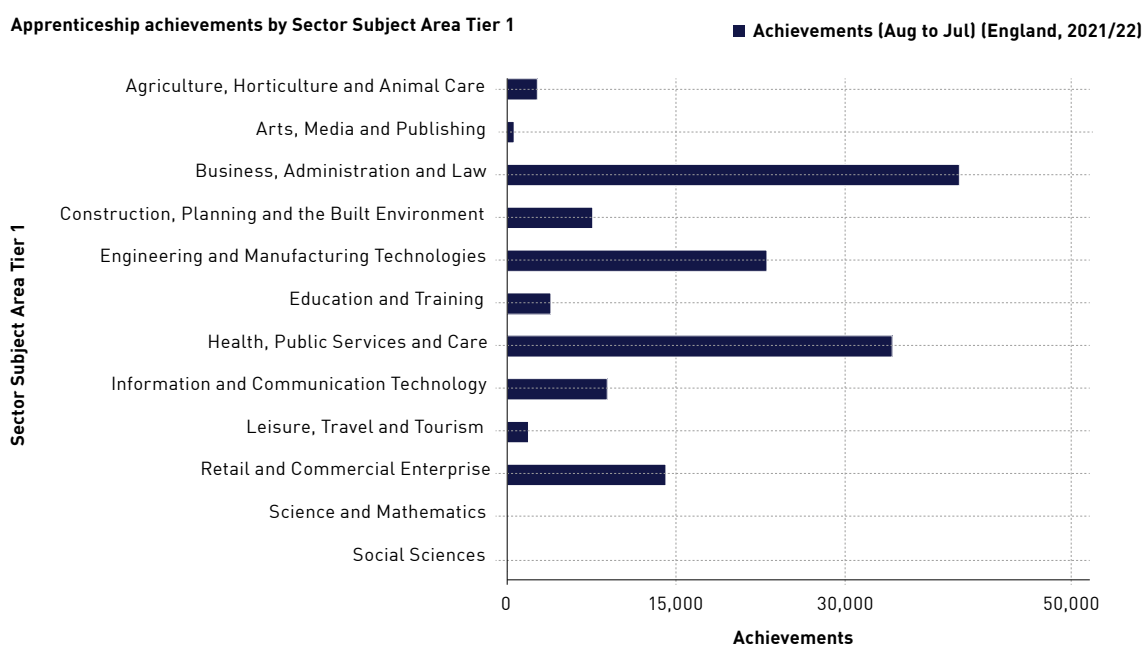
Apprenticeship Starts and Achievements in the Creative Route

Whilst the number of occupational standards is proportionate to the other routes, the use of these apprenticeships by employers has been poor.

When compared to other industry sectors, apprenticeship starts across the Arts, Media and Publishing sector (Creative Route) are a **very small proportion of overall starts**, with only 2000 of the overall 349,200 starts in the 2021/22 academic year being in the **creative sector**¹⁹.



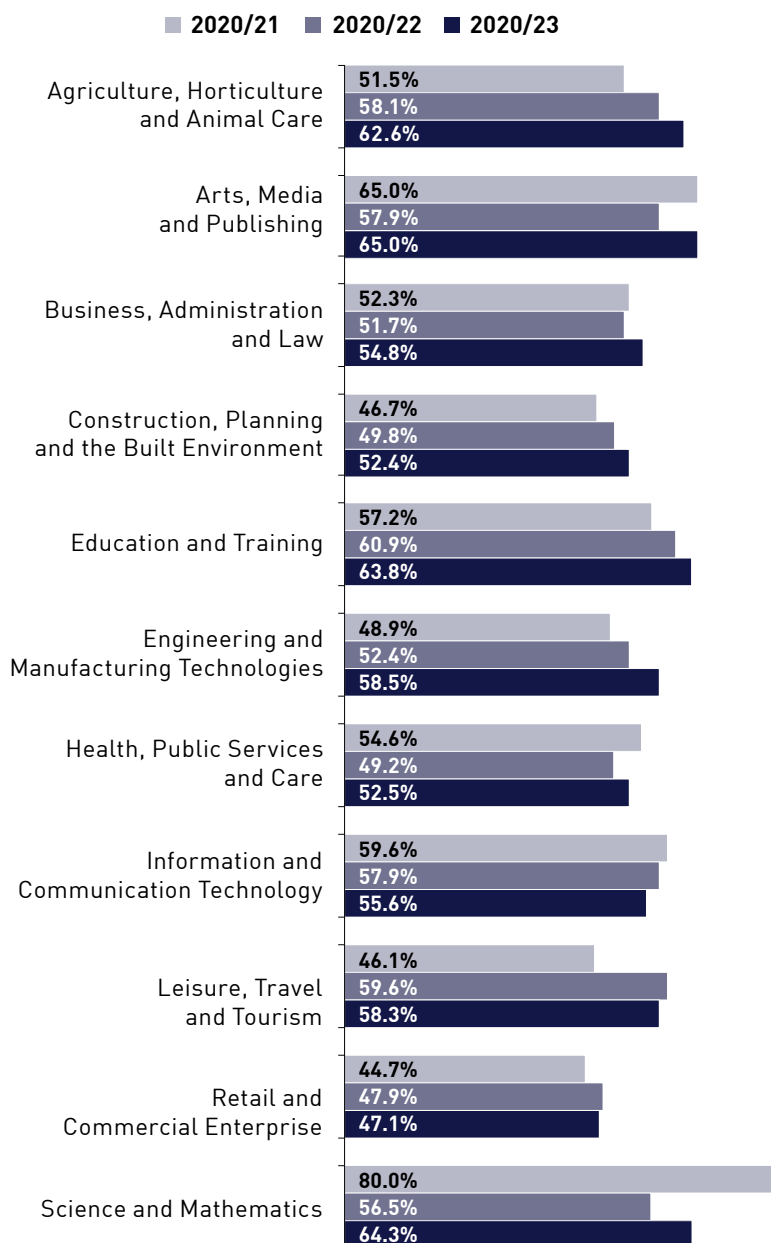
The same can be said of apprenticeship achievements: only 600 of the overall 137,200 achievements in the 2021/22 academic year being in the creative sector²⁰.



¹⁹ Apprenticeships in England by industry characteristics , Academic year 2020/21 – Explore education statistics – GOV.UK (explore-education-statistics.service.gov.uk)

²⁰ Apprenticeships in England by industry characteristics , Academic year 2020/21 – Explore education statistics – GOV.UK (explore-education-statistics.service.gov.uk)

Qualification achievement rates (QAR), published in April 2024, also show some variance by sector. In the arts, media and publishing sector (where the majority of creative and design occupations reside), the QAR is generally improving and approaching the Government’s target of 67% achievement rate by 2025²¹. However, individual occupations will be performing better than others, as can be seen in Annex C.



It is clear that those industry sectors with a history of supporting apprenticeships have remained committed to developing occupational standards and were able to continue to place apprentices onto programme during the transition from frameworks to occupational standards.

The more mature nature of the training provision has also been an aid in more rapid uptake of apprenticeship training and assessment; industries newer to the benefits and opportunities of apprenticeships are taking longer to put operations into motion.

²¹ [Apprenticeship_achievement_rate_sector_update_2024.pdf \(publishing.service.gov.uk\)](#)

Whilst the lag in developing apprenticeships is one feature, the occupational standards in place in the creative sector remain relatively traditional in their uptake with over 91% of apprenticeship starts being at levels 2 and 3, and only 9% being above level 4. Figures for the 2021/22 academic year show that this approach is out of step with the general trend towards recruiting and placing apprentices on higher and/or degree level apprenticeships, as can be seen below.

	All Sectors	Creative Sector	
STARTS for the 2021/22 academic year			
Apprenticeship Starts	349,190	2,000	0.6% of all starts
Intermediate and Advanced (Level 2 and 3) Apprenticeships	69% (242,800)	91% (1,820)	0.75% of all starts
Higher (Level 4 and above) apprenticeships	30.5% (106,400)	6% (120)	0.1% of all starts
Degree level (Level 6 and 7) apprenticeships	12.4% (43,200)	3% (60)	0.1% of all starts

When drilling down into the particular occupational standards in use at level 4 upwards, there are also a number of concerns. Starts and achievements on individual creative route occupations are provided in Annex C.

Despite the efforts to develop occupational standards and gain approval for these from IFATE, of the:

Level		
Level 4 and 5 Occupational Standard	15 occupational standards available	In April 2024, all were active, with 3 in review
Level 6 and 7 Occupational Standards	14 occupational standards available	In April 2024, all were actively in use for apprentices <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 3 are paused due to lack of End Point Assessment Organisation • Only 4 are classified as degree apprenticeships, with: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 2 of these on the non-integrated model, and • a further integrated degree apprenticeship in review

There are clearly a number of issues in relation to the creative sector that are affecting apprenticeship development and uptake.

However, there are also much broader issues in relation to employment opportunity, employment practice and the investment in training within the creative sector that also affect apprentice uptake.

These are now explored in the following section.

REASONS FOR LOW UPTAKE OF CREATIVE APPRENTICESHIPS

Before we discuss the low uptake of apprenticeships in the creative sector, it is useful to better understand the sector and its employment practices.

The Creative Industries Policy and Evidence Centre (PEC)²² publishes regular data originating from the Department for Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS), where definition of the Creative Industries comprises the following nine subsectors:

- Advertising and marketing
- Architecture
- Crafts
- Design and designer fashion
- Film, TV, video, radio and photography
- IT, software and computer services
- Publishing
- Museums, Galleries and Libraries
- Music, performing and visual art

Here are some of the headline statistics about the creative industries:

- Prior to Covid the Creative Industries contributed £116bn in GVA in 2019, growing twice as fast between 2011 and 2019 than the rate of the UK economy as a whole [\[DCMS 2021\]](#).
- In the year from October 2019 to September 2020 the Creative Industries accounted for 2.2 million jobs [\[DCMS 2021\]](#).
- The creative economy (Creative Industries plus creative jobs in other sectors) employed 3.2 million in 2018 [\[DCMS 2019\]](#).
- Self-employment accounts for 32% of Creative Industry employment in the UK compared with 16% for the economy more broadly [\[DCMS 2021\]](#).
- In 2019 95% of creative companies were micro-businesses (fewer than 10 employees) which is 6 percentage points more than in the rest of the economy. [\[DCMS 2022\]](#).
- Around 300,000, or over one in eight UK businesses (11.8%) in 2019 are part of the Creative Industries [\[DCMS 2022\]](#).
- Of all creative businesses, 34% are located in London, 62% in London and the greater South East (London, South East and East of England), 13% in the North of England (North East, North West, and Yorkshire and the Humber), 10% in the Midlands (East and West Midlands), 2% in Wales, 5% in Scotland and 1% in Northern Ireland (ibid.).
- 57% of UK CreaTech companies are based in London [\[CreaTech activity in the UK 2021\]](#).
- 78% of AI and Data CreaTech businesses based in the UK are located in London.

²² Creative Industries Policy & Evidence Centre | National Statistics on... [\(pec.ac.uk\)](#)

Skills and Jobs

- 72% of the creative workforce are highly qualified, i.e. hold a degree/ higher level qualification (Level 4 or higher) or equivalent compared with 45% for the whole economy in 2019 ([DCMS 2021](#)).
- 83% of creative occupations are within 'higher level occupations', i.e., Managers, directors and senior officials; Professional occupations; and Associate professional and technical occupations, compared to 46% of the workforce across the UK (ibid.).
- Just under one third (32%) of the creative workforce is freelance, compared to 16% across the UK generally ([DCMS Sector Economic Estimates: Employment Oct 2019 - Sep 2020](#)).

When looking at these statistics, it is immediately clear that:

- The current profile of occupational standards on offer are too low (in level) as to meet the higher-level skills needs of this sector;
- Employers predominantly recruit from the higher technical and graduate talent pools as opposed to technical areas, where most creative apprenticeships are offered;
- Micro businesses will find accessing funding and supporting apprentices throughout the full duration of an apprenticeship very challenging;
- Freelancers, unless they recruit an apprentice and can commit to employing them over the duration of the apprenticeship, cannot access apprenticeship training funds – so cannot utilise apprenticeships to develop themselves;
- Training providers offering higher level and degree level apprenticeships in the London area are needed.

In February 2023, PEC published **The Good Work Review: Job Quality in the Creative Industries**²³, a year-long, four UK-nation review of job quality in the creative industries, including evidence from 120 creative industry sector organisations. It considered 40 indicators of what makes work 'good' - including fair pay, flexible working, paid overtime and employee representation - the review finds that no creative sub-sector is thriving in all areas.

However, the Good Work Review also points to ways in which investment in the workforce could strengthen the sector, ensuring the UK remains a creative leader.

Of particular relevance to this report are the findings in relation to workforce development and/or training plans, with only one third of creative industry employers have training plans in place. The report also details the key issues faced by employers with training and apprenticeships, which are now summarised.

- Employer investment in skills and worker participation in education and training in the Creative Industries lags behind other sectors.
- Further, where it does take place, training in the Creative Industries is highly skewed towards on-the-job training, and job-specific skills.
- While Creative employers are more likely to provide training in new technology, they are less likely than all industries to provide any other type of training.
- Ongoing skills shortages and skills gaps in the Creative Industries suggest that the supply of appropriately skilled workers coming through the skills system and active in the labour market is failing to keep pace or align with employer demand.
- The evidence suggests a range of underlying causes – linked to both the supply (skills provision) and demand side (take-up of training).

²³ *Creative Industries Policy & Evidence Centre | The Good Work Review (pec.ac.uk)*

- Evidence from the UK Employer Perspectives Survey finds that Creative employers are more likely to suggest that the course or the subject matter of learning options available at FE Colleges and Higher Education Institutions are not relevant to their needs.
- Further, a very small share of creative employers' report having any staff undertaking apprenticeships citing that:
 - apprenticeships are not suitable given their firm size or business model;
 - are not relevant to the industry; or
 - they lack the funds or time to support these learning options.

Whilst reforms in technical education in different parts of the UK are generally thought to have enhanced the broad relevance of work-based programmes such as Apprenticeships, especially by strengthening the organisation of training around a job, further reforms are still underway as levels of take up still remain quite modest.

This is particularly in comparison to traditional academic education pathways on to and through university and provides an impetus to continue to stimulate quality and take up in key sectors. Indeed, the level of employers providing Apprenticeships has persisted at low levels.

The findings from the Review point to a need to drive further reforms end to end in the skills system, including:

- strengthening and modernising the learning offer so that it better meets the dynamic and changing needs of the Creative Industries;
- enhancing incentives and support to drive employer ownership and investment in skills; and
- addressing the barriers Creative workers face in participating in learning and development and progressing at work.

The review also highlights the ever-changing skills system, in structures and funding as well as skills initiatives, none of which are helped by a reliance on short term piloting and funds. In order to address the low levels of apprentice uptake, the review offers a road map with the following recommendation aimed at the skills system, of which apprenticeships are a key part:

Recommendation 9²⁴: Enhance the relevance and responsiveness of the skills system, modernising and future-proofing the learning offer. Key Activities:

- Develop a common Labour Market Information (LMI) framework for identifying skill gaps, anticipating changing needs and dealing with megatrends.
- Increase funding to enable employers and providers to work together to update curriculum and co-design new courses.
- Promote greater flexibility and diversity in sector-focused learning options (short, modular, stackable).
- Strengthen technical education and vocational pathways, extending funding, refreshing framework, extending pathways, enhancing flexibilities, and trialling new sector-focused initiatives (e.g., Bootcamps).

²⁴ Creative Industries Policy & Evidence Centre | The Good Work Review (pec.ac.uk)

In 2020, PEC also published the Creative Skills Monitor 2020²⁵ which drilled down further into apprenticeships in the sector and reported:

- Take-up of Apprenticeships remains very low, at 5% of Creative employers; and those that do offer Apprenticeships are more likely to do so for new staff, for a shorter duration, and to have only begun to engage with Apprenticeships more recently.
- Creative businesses are also more likely to look to private providers to deliver Apprenticeships.
- Creative employers that do offer Apprenticeships have a greater likelihood to have been involved in their design than employers across the wider economy.
- Many employers that don't offer Apprenticeships suggest these programmes aren't suitable for their business given its size or business model.
- While there is some variation by firm size and sub-sector, employers in the Creative Industries are less likely than average to have offered training for their staff and (relatedly) employees working in the sector are less likely to report having received training.

A more detailed extract of the findings in relation to apprenticeships is provided in Annex D.

Taken all together this raises concerns both about the pipeline of talent to the sector, and the level of both up and reskilling when in work. The evidence suggests considerable potential to enhance management practices amongst Creative businesses, so to better exploit talent and develop the skills needed for future success.

Uptake by Potential Apprentices

Employers are not the only ones to be converted to the broader benefits of apprenticeships, despite the challenges, those moving through education and seeking employment in the sector are also a factor. There clearly remains a preference for recruiting graduates into roles, with nearly 75% of the workforce holding degrees or higher degrees – compared to only 44% for all industries.

The creative courses do therefore give graduates the skills they need to gain employment in the roles they want, with good earning potential when they stay in the creative sector with a relevant degree.

The change to apprenticeships, away from degree qualifications, is not going to be easy.

Apprentices often report that they would choose an apprenticeship over a traditional full-time degree if they could secure a good salary, with good prospects for long term employment in the sector they wish to work in, and in roles with good career progression opportunities.

They also report that they want to be assured with the content of the programme or the quality of the teaching but raise concern over the demands of an apprenticeship in terms of workload, having the time to study, and the duration of the apprenticeship.

In some cases, apprentices also question the flexibilities of the employment and apprentice contracts that they must commit to; for example, how will the apprenticeship be able to adapt to them if they have circumstantial and personal changes (for example, redundancy, change of employer, personal health, family related reasons).

Opportunities in the creative sector for apprentices that meet all these needs, in the right employer, and in the right location, are rare; in fact, meeting all of these challenges is often only afforded by the larger levy paying organisations.

²⁵ *PEC-Skills-Monitor-FINAL-July-2020.pdf (assets-servd.host)*



CHALLENGES WITH DELIVERING APPRENTICESHIPS FOR THE CREATIVE SECTOR

Across all apprenticeships, there are a common set of issues that prevail which reduce the opportunity to increase apprentice starts. However, there are further challenges in the creative sector that reduce apprenticeship starts even further.

The barriers and challenges are now summarised.

1. Lack of strategic employer engagement to focus activity

The Government placed 'employers at the heart of the apprenticeship system' in 2014; in doing so, it also removed direct Government investment in the sector 'standards setting' bodies that had been positioned to develop and manage a range of standards and skills packages. There has been common complaint with silo working since this point in the creative sector.

The patchy development and establishment of the employer 'trailblazer' groups had the effect of scattering sector skills strategies, with occupational standards developed sporadically with little oversight of the routes into and progression pathways within occupations.

We are now nearing a decade of employer ownership of some occupational standards, during which there have been major governance and policy developments that have made the process of developing and managing occupational standards resource and time intensive, expensive to maintain, and requires the investment in dedicated expertise to navigate the complexities of the apprenticeship system.

It has all too often fallen to larger employers, with significant apprenticeship levy amounts to maximise use of. The apprenticeship system has, as a result, lacked focus on smaller employers with occupations developed where they might struggle to successfully deliver the full occupational requirements needed for the occupation.

That said, employers who initially committed to managing some occupations are reporting lethargy with the apprenticeship process and need to release resources and investment back into their business to address the compound challenges faced from Brexit and Covid-19.

Examining the occupational standards in the creative route plainly shows the impact of waning employer engagement and investment in apprenticeship development:

- There are a host of level 2 and 3 apprenticeships with no progression routes clearly identifiable, and very few active and/or deliverable apprenticeships between levels 4 to 7
- Employers are not routinely coming forward to manage and address the issues with existing apprenticeships, resulting in out-dated occupational standards and low take up
- Employers are also not coming forward to develop new occupations, even those previously identified, which is holding back further investment in skills, trialling new sector-focused initiatives (e.g., Bootcamps).

To address this, leadership is needed to deliver a clear strategy for the creative sector, which all stakeholders can rally behind; this strategy also needs to prioritise activity, with key performance indicators set to monitor and manage outcomes and must be supported by significant levels of investment from a range of stakeholders to reduce risk.

2. Lack of apprenticeship training provision and expertise

Many occupational standards have been developed either in isolation from, or with limited, training provider engagement. IFATE has recognised this issue, with many occupational standards now having to be revised to ensure they are deliverable. Training provider engagement is now being promoted, and essential for degree apprenticeship, for occupational standards development and ongoing review.

In terms of delivering apprenticeships, training providers have come forward in many sectors; however, in the creative sector, training providers have been somewhat reluctant to engage. The reasons are multifaceted, but the core reasons are:

- training providers need to prove that the apprenticeship programmes they invest in are going to be viable in the short and long term, and
- regulatory compliance with the variety of external quality assurance organisations, from Ofsted and OfS, to ESFA and even with OfQual, remains a barrier to entry due to potential reputational risk.

Delivery of apprenticeship programmes are far more complex than short courses and traditional academic programmes and require significant levels of investment. This includes:

- Designing the content of the programme to meet the requirements of the occupational standards and in the case of degree apprenticeships, the end point assessment
- Developing the programme to meet employer and apprentice needs, which may require significant expertise in more flexible delivery, including day release, block release, blended learning, and front-loading models
- Addressing the challenges of recognising work-based learning opportunities in each employment setting, alongside the delivery of more traditional qualifications
- Ensuring resources are in place to support initial assessment, contracting with the apprentice and employers, delivery of quarterly progress reviews throughout the duration of the apprenticeship, through to preparation of the apprentice for the end point assessment
- Complying with the complexities of multiple regulatory organisations, requiring regular and extensive reporting and auditing, and ongoing assessment of performance in case of inspection.

Programmes are often developed by teaching staff who are keen to work with employers, where existing courses can be adapted. However, the complexities of apprenticeship development and delivery are not often initially apparent, and if commitments have been made, such sporadic programme development can leave training provider resources stretched, and validation of apprenticeship programmes slow to achieve.

In some instances, training providers also lack the education, expertise and direct experience to deliver teaching against the full demands of the occupational standards. It is often necessary to bring in industry experts to cover some teaching areas. This raises issues with the regular availability of these experts, and the need for teaching staff to support delivery to be compliant with Ofsted requirements for teaching quality and safeguarding.

Institutions need a clear strategy for their investment in apprenticeship programmes and must be underpinned by the expertise required to ensure quality, planned growth and risks mitigated.

In 2016, the Higher Education Funding Council for England (HEFCE) launched its Degree Apprenticeship Development Fund (DADF) to support universities to proactively put into place the systems, mechanisms, and resources to ensure sustained growth in areas where there was a clear business demand.

Since then, a large number of universities have invested in growing apprenticeship teams and have recently been rewarded through additional investment funding from the now Office for Students (OfS). Under the £8 million Strategic Priorities Grant²⁶, training providers have been allocated funding to develop and grow higher and degree apprenticeships over the 2022/23 academic year.

Where universities have yet to enter the apprenticeship market, it remains to be seen whether funding will be forthcoming; But, it is likely as the now former skills, apprenticeships and HE minister Robert Halfon has repeatedly said it is his goal for every university and higher education provider to offer degree apprenticeships.

²⁶ <https://www.officeforstudents.org.uk/publications/mid-year-allocations-of-recurrent-funding-for-2022-23/>

Examining the opportunities for training providers in the creative route to invest in apprenticeships does have its challenges:

- There are relatively few occupational standards open to training providers to develop viable programmes against at levels 4 to 7
- Many of the creative occupations also lack formal underpinning qualifications such as HNCs, HNDs, and both undergraduate and post-graduate degrees
- High levels of investment are needed to offer and manage apprenticeships, and when looking at the current funding band allocations assigned to these level 4 to 7 apprenticeships, the financial return is not there

To address this, training providers must be more pro-active in the development and ongoing management of occupational standards and in the discussions in relation to funding bands to ensure higher level and degree apprenticeships are deliverable and financially viable.

Training providers, who are yet to enter the apprenticeship market, must consider if and how they will invest in apprenticeship development and their ongoing management, and plan for any potential OfS funding that could support this aim.

All training providers must also be prepared to tackle the complexities of regulatory compliance to ensure reputational risk is minimised.

3. Lack of apprenticeship end point assessment solutions

As with the experience of training providers, End Point Assessment Organisations, have also been reluctant to come forward for the very same reasons.

As a result, many occupational standards that employers and training providers might want to proceed with are being held back: Apprentices can only start on programmes where an EPAO is in place (or agreed in principle with the ESFA)²⁷. Three of the 14 level 6 and 7 apprenticeships in the creative sector are currently in this position.

End Point Assessment is in itself resource intensive, with a huge variation in assessment methodology, from exams, projects and interviews, through to lengthy practical assessments that can last several days.

Underpinning this is the need for independent assessors, who will often need specific and recent industry experience, training in assessment, and the capacity and capability to be available to assessment organisations.

The costs of EPA can be quite significant and must be factored into the funding model that training providers establish with the employer at the outset.

Once again external regulation of EPA is ever present and EPAOs need to consider their own business plans to ensure they remain compliant with both regulatory and ESFA funding criteria.

The same can be said of degree apprenticeships, where recent changes to IFATE policy now support universities in delivering the EPA plan as part of the programme. However, every EPA plan will remain different, need independent assessors, and will be subject to external quality assurance.

²⁷ *Pause to starts on apprenticeships with no end point assessment organisation (EPAO) / Institute for Apprenticeships and Technical Education*

Universities will also have the challenge of revising and redeveloping programmes to comply with EPA plans, but the changes in degree apprenticeship policy may prove beneficial to increasing the number of degree apprenticeships (by reducing non-degree apprenticeships) and could support more employers to place apprentices on programmes with internationally recognised outcomes: a degree in combination with an apprenticeship completion certificate.

Universities will need to continue to collaborate with external End Point Assessment Organisations in order to deliver apprenticeship training. However, universities will also need to identify routes to access expertise and resources in order to become End Point Assessment Organisations in their own right for degree apprenticeships, and potentially higher apprenticeships at levels 4 and 5 should IFATE proposals in relation to mandatory qualifications be implemented²⁸.

4. Insufficient funding for apprenticeship training and assessment

Many apprenticeships have failed to attract starts due to the allocation of low funding bands by IFATE, ESFA and the Department of Education.

Employers, particularly those who pay the apprenticeship levy, often refuse to pay any costs above the funding band allocated, and as a result too many apprenticeships are not viable. In the case of the creative route, this is born out.

There is always, subject to the trailblazer group and IFATE agreeing, the opportunity to review the assigned funding band, but the process is complex. Clear training and EPA plans are needed to demonstrate that the KSBs can be met over a sensible duration of training, with the costs of teaching (in a variety of forms) and consumables presented clearly.

Employers in the trailblazer group are reliant on training providers and EPA organisations to present this information to them. However, too often, teaching, teaching assistants, independent assessors, support costs and consumables not effectively presented and evidenced, and are not challenged by the trailblazer group (as they are not experts in training costs). As a result, low rates are applied; This is despite IFATE and ESFA also carrying out independent reviews of costing.

Where apprenticeships are operational, the manner in which apprenticeship funding is drawn down during the training period – monthly payments on account from employers and Government – can be problematic.

There are two major risks to training providers in terms of funding:

- ESFA clawback where audits show irregularities, and
- Apprentices leaving after they have completed their training but before and during EPA.

In terms of these risks, the latter is the more problematic. Whilst the full apprenticeship training period is used to capture the full costs of the apprenticeship, 20% of these funds are held in the digital account until the apprentices carries out the EPA process.

²⁸ 2022 / 2023 - Mandatory qualifications criteria (closed) / Institute for Apprenticeships and Technical Education

For an apprenticeship with the maximum possible funding band (£27,000), this amounts to £5,000 per apprentice. Should the apprentice leave, it is the training provider that is penalised – with the full 20% on account being returned to ESFA. Employers will also have paid up front for training, with them also losing this investment.

Even if only a small number of apprentices leave, the cumulative amounts can quickly escalate, placing the training provider in financial risk.

The incoming changes in degree apprenticeship policy should prove to mitigate such financial issues, with universities also being able to improve their reporting of timely apprenticeship completions and qualification achievement rates (QAR), which ESFA sets and monitors targets for performance against for each training provider.

Training Providers, including universities, will need to develop their costing models in order to better support and inform the review of apprenticeship funding bands, and to prepare to identify costs for integrated degree apprenticeships, where the university is responsible for delivering EPA plans.

Training Providers will also need to focus on ensuring compliance with the ESFA funding rules, which change each year, and to support apprentices, with assistance from their employers, to successfully complete both the training and assessment elements of their apprenticeship.

5. Navigating and accessing apprenticeship funding remains difficult

The complexities and intricacies of apprenticeship funding can be difficult for employers to navigate.

Apprentice levy paying employers in the creative sector are utilising a good proportion of their levy funds to support apprentice training, they are not fully utilising all the available funding from the levy. If more occupational standards were approved and in delivery, it is likely that levy paying employers would utilise their full allocation.

However, from the apprenticeship start data available, it is clear that apprenticeship funding for non-levy paying employers remains an issue.

As we have seen from the reasons for low uptake of apprenticeships by employers, the sector is predominantly of self-employed freelancing individuals (who cannot, unless that take on an apprentice, access apprenticeships for themselves) and micro businesses, where long term contracts to keep businesses operational are limited, and as a result, the apprenticeship model tends not to work as well as it could do.

No matter the employer size, accessing apprenticeship funds need expertise to ensure apprentices meet all eligibility criteria, with employment and training provider initial checks completed before training providers are able to access and draw down funds via the digital apprenticeship account.

The Government has offered some flexibility in employers sharing their levy with other employers (levy transfer) and sharing apprentices with other employers (flexi-job apprenticeships) where long-term contracting or exposure to all the competences needed to successfully achieve the apprenticeship might be an issue.

These schemes are in their relative infancy, and their effectiveness and resilience yet to be tested.

Scheme	Information
Apprentice Levy Transfers	<p>Levy paying employers can now (from April 2024) transfer up to 50% of their ‘unused levy pot’ to other employers via their digital accounts²⁹.</p> <p>Employers, can now utilise the public pledge system, and dictate how they wish to support other employers, be it:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • in a specific location (local and regional options), • in a specific industry sector, • for specific types of roles, and/or • at specific levels. <p>Use of the levy transfer option remains low, and of those that pledge funds, few direct funds to the creative sector.</p>
Flexi-Job Apprenticeships	<p>The Government launched its ‘Flexi-Job Apprenticeship’ proposals in 2021 and followed this up with the launch of pilot in April 2022³⁰.</p> <p>These apprenticeships have been designed to ensure that those sectors and occupations where short-term contracts or other non-standard employment models are the norm can access the benefits of apprenticeships. They will be available to employers and apprentices in two ways:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • With the involvement of a Flexi-Job Apprenticeship Agency (ATA): where an agency employs the apprentice directly for the duration of their apprenticeship but arranges placements for the apprentice with host businesses. • Without the involvement of an agency: where the apprentice is able to secure multiple short employment contracts directly with businesses that support the requirements of the apprenticeship. Supported by their training provider, the apprentice takes their learning and progress with them as they move between employment contracts and change employers. This model is often described as a Portable Flexi-Job Apprenticeship.

²⁹ Transferring your apprenticeship levy to another business - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk)

³⁰ Flexi-Job Apprenticeships - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk)

Scheme	Information
<p>Flexi-Job Apprenticeships</p>	<p>Over recent years, the creative sector has tested the model for a variety of occupational standards, and in the creative sector with two training providers, and through two ATAs³¹:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • BBC • ScreenSkills³² (a partnership with Netflix, Warner Media, Prime Video, Banijay UK, Lime Pictures, Sky, APX Content Ventures) <p>Initial feedback has raised issue with the additional complexities of handling contract negotiations with several employers for a single apprentice, which increase the support costs needed by the training provider. As a result, the direct training provider model is not working as readily as it could.</p> <p>The ATA models, whilst they employ the apprentice for the duration of the training and EPA period, there are concerns as to where the apprentice will progress to and in securing long term employment. Again, the substantial costs involved in employing and training apprentices are a significant factor for the ATA.</p> <p>The BBC reported some benefits, including the ability to influence and change the perceptions of apprenticeships to employers in their supply chain, to improve EDI within the sector and to improve the uptake of training for apprenticeships which has managed to secure viable cohorts for training providers who might not have offered apprenticeship programmes.</p> <p>Across this pilot, the DfE committed £5 million in grant funding to 11 agencies at the original launch in 2021/22 and 2022/23, with a target of 1,500 apprentices recruited in the initial roll-out.</p> <p>ScreenSkills has raised concerns over future funding uncertainty, explaining that film and TV industry firms already pay the apprenticeship levy, apprentice wages and associated on-costs, and would not be realistic to expect them to fund a support service like ScreenSkills once government grant funding dries up. It has reiterated its position that it would like to see some of the levy ringfenced to fund intermediary body services to aid employers and manage apprenticeship opportunities.</p> <p>However, it is expanding the opportunity for flexi-job apprenticeship agencies to register as registered providers for the service.</p>

With a future general election imminent, is likely that the apprenticeship levy will be a topic of policy review and possibly, expansion in terms of who pays the apprenticeship levy, or at what percentage rate employers pay the levy. There is also the possibility that the additional funding generated through the expansion of the apprenticeship levy, may be expanded to cover other skills training as part of a mixture of programmes, where there remains a long-term commitment to apprenticeships no matter the political party.

³¹ Register of Flexi-Job Apprenticeship Agencies - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk)

³² ScreenSkills wins new apprenticeship funds - apply now - ScreenSkills

WHAT ARE THE POSSIBLE SOLUTIONS/OPTIONS TO ADDRESS LOW APPRENTICESHIP UPTAKE IN THE CREATIVE SECTOR?

The research here shows that employers are not coordinating through any single hub, or in any specific geographical area, to drive up growth in apprenticeships. However, there is a commitment and a demand from the creative sector for routes to higher technical and professional occupations, but the occupational standards are not yet there.

Even though there are a large number of universities and private training providers supporting the delivery of apprenticeships across many sectors, the level of uptake and delivery at level 4 and above in the creative sector is devoid of any major players and competition.

This situation has not truly been helped by the recent launch of the Office for Students degree apprenticeship funding competition³³, as there are only 4 occupational standards in the creative sector that any provider could bid for funding; the remaining level 6 and 7 apprenticeships are classified as non-degree apprenticeships and are not eligible for this funding competition.

Whilst there are a number of major challenges with the uptake, delivery and assessment of apprenticeships in the creative sector, there are also a significant number of opportunities that BCU and UAL could capitalise on if it chooses to invest in apprenticeships.

We now present four solutions to BCU and UAL that would drive up the numbers of apprenticeships in the creative sector, these being: Leadership to identify and prioritise creative apprenticeships in strategic areas

1. Design and develop the occupational standards that are needed by the sector
2. Invest in the delivery of apprenticeship training at level 4 upwards
3. Drive demand for apprenticeships where the creatives sectors are prominent and link to local and regional skills priorities

³³ Degree apprenticeships funding competition: Guidance for providers - Office for Students

1. Leadership to identify and prioritise creative apprenticeships in strategic areas

The creative industry is currently missing a strategy to address the prioritisation and investment in technical, higher technical and professional skills, with apprenticeships as part of the core solution. This remains the case even with more recently published Skills Task Force actions in November 2023, detailed in Annex E³⁴.

UAL is already the UK's leading university for the arts, and when combined with its central London locations offering ease of access to most of the creative sector employers. The same can be said for Birmingham City University (BCU), who are ideally placed within the West Midlands Combined Authority (WMCA) area, where there is a rapidly growing creative and digital technologies sector employing some 76,000 people³⁵, and the creative sector is being supported via 'Create Central'³⁶ to deliver part of the 'Growth Programme' in this sector.

In bringing the two universities together in these two regions where the creative and digital sectors are growing and developing, and employing a wide range of people, there is a real opportunity to bring high profile employers and key stakeholders together to establish a **Creative Apprenticeship Leadership Forum**, with the aim of driving investment in apprenticeships that will deliver technical and professional skills.

The purpose of the forum would be to commission and deliver a **skills action plan for the creative sector with a focus on technical, higher technical and professional apprenticeships**. The action plan will require commitment from senior leaders, who must work to identify and support the breaking down of barriers to apprentice uptake, and drive forward new opportunities to support apprenticeship design, development and delivery.

In establishing the forum, BCU and UAL would benefit from first-hand information and data analysis, with opportunities to partner with industry, the Government, and the broader sector to push forward better informed technical and professional apprenticeships where employers and apprentices could link up to the opportunities within regional and local skills activities, now and in the future.

Leadership of the creative apprenticeship action plan will require exemplary business and stakeholder engagement, with relationships being forged across a variety of organisations. In establishing and operating the forum, BCU and UAL would need to engage senior level project management resources, with membership of the Leadership Forum needing to be identified and confirmed. A number of round table events will need to be facilitated to ensure clear objectives are set, monitored, and met.

It is most likely that the forum will require a number of task and finish groups, with membership of these from beyond the Leadership Forum; this is where BCU and UAL could also capitalise on its broader business development activities, and to bring in expertise from UAL's Awarding Body and ArtsTemps programmes, as well as the links made via BCU and the West Midlands Combined Authority.

With the leadership forum and skills action plan in place, BCU and UAL's partnership can be maximised, and the delivery of both BCUs and UALs apprenticeship agreements enabled and supported, with apprentices also being recruited from the local areas and to improve the equality, diversity and inclusion of both the universities' workforce.

³⁴ *A Sustainable Future for Skills: the Report of the Screen Sectors Skills Task Force | BFI*

³⁵ *Creative & Digital Technologies | Invest West Midlands*

³⁶ *Create Central chosen to lead West Midlands creative business growth programme (wmca.org.uk)*

2. Design and development of technical and professional apprenticeships for the creative sector

Employer lethargy towards the ownership and management of occupational standards has set in across a wide range of sectors. This may be stalling opportunities to identify, design, and development (and review) existing and new apprenticeships.

We now present four solutions to BCU and UAL that would drive up the numbers of apprenticeships in the creative sector, these being: Leadership to identify and prioritise creative apprenticeships in strategic areas

- Identify and support the employer trailblazer group chair(s)
- Be the lead contact for the trailblazer group
- Develop proposals for, and carry out the drafting of (and revisions to) the occupational standard(s) and EPA plan(s) in partnership with IFATE
- Support the development of training plans and funding band applications, and
- Work in collaboration with employers, training providers, Awarding Organisations (including UAL Awarding Organisation), end point assessment organisations, professional bodies etc to maximise the promotion of the apprenticeship and coordinate high quality delivery.

Being the central lead for trailblazer groups would require some resource, with that resource having expertise in the development of documentation through to submission with IFATE. Depending on the number of occupations that BCU and UAL might consider supporting, this could be a part time or full-time opportunity within BCU and UAL.

In return, BCU and UAL would be able to introduce and work directly with employers to identify occupations, entry, and progression pathways across occupations, and to have a hand in the design of the apprenticeship, the inclusion of mandatory qualifications (level 4 through to 7), and ideally position BCU and UAL for future apprenticeship delivery.

As a number of new occupations have already been identified by IfATE during its sector review work, initial focus could be on the development of the level 4 to level 7 occupational standards titled:

- | | |
|------------------------------|--|
| • Costume Designer | • Producer |
| • Fashion Designer | • 3D Artist |
| • Graphic Designer | • Deputy Stage Manager |
| • Production Designer | • Stage Manager |
| • Animator | • Camera Assistant |
| • Cinematographer | • Lighting Assistant |
| • Head of Lighting | • Music Technologist |
| • Head of Sound | • Sound Assistant |
| • Sound Designer | • Physical Special Effects Technician |
| • Lighting Designer | • Prosthetic Make Up Artist |

There were no level 4 and 5 occupations present in this list offered by IfATE, but it would be pertinent to consider how apprentices could access professional apprenticeships at level 6 and 7, and assess if the occupational profiles at these levels could support the development of the higher technical workforce.

The same approach could be made where there are no progression routes from level 3 apprenticeships, such as the level 3 fashion studio assistant and in the production arts sub-sector, into level 4 (and upwards) apprenticeship programmes.

It is most likely that BCU and UAL could capitalise on the programmes within their current portfolio to ensure that apprenticeships add to the range of opportunities open and where this would ideally drive forward income generating opportunities.

There is a clear need for shorter technical training in the following areas:

- **Graphics and graphic design**
- **Visual merchandising**
- **Illustrators**
- **Intellectual property**
- **Online and social media**
- **Videography**
- **Branding**
- **Events staff**
- **Marketing**
- **Cultural Agencies**

Where apprenticeships can map to these areas, short course content and delivery modes could be utilised to work with employers and to develop and ultimately deliver apprenticeships.

This would also support opportunity for BCU, UAL and UAL Awarding Body to collaborate and to develop high quality qualifications with end point assessment mechanisms that dovetail hop-on/hop-off apprenticeship progression models, and to determine if occupational standards could be concurrently designed and developed (reducing the duplication of activities in occupational areas).

3. A partnership of two universities to investing in, and expanding, delivery of technical and professional apprenticeships for the creative sector

Should the development of technical, higher technical and professional apprenticeships grow through these activities, both BCU and UAL will need to consider their role in investing in, and expanding, apprenticeship training (and assessment) for this key sector.

In considering the above two actions, there remains the fact that there are very few training providers offering higher technical and professional apprenticeships in the creative sector; this was one of the biggest issues being reported in IFATE's sector review, and if BCU and UAL intend to drive up demand and position themselves as leading universities supporting apprenticeships, being an active training provider for apprenticeships is a must.

Whilst current occupational standards may not list mandatory qualifications, there is an opportunity to offer these – employers and apprentices alike are seeking assurance on the quality of training, and also want to secure ease of progression.

This partnership approach will also open doors to UK wide apprenticeship training and assessment, offering BCU and UAL qualifications, attractive to those in industry recruiting and training apprentices, but also those entering the workforce for the first time. BCU and UAL might also want to consider supporting employers and apprentices with clear careers information, advice and guidance for those seeking to enter and progress via creative careers.

However, there may now be opportunity to access development funds to support BCU and UAL in making such a major transition in delivery models that were not open a few years ago. These funds originate from the Department for Education³⁷ or the Office for Students³⁸.

³⁷ Higher technical education skills injection fund - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk)

³⁸ <https://www.officeforstudents.org.uk/publications/mid-year-allocations-of-recurrent-funding-for-2022-23/>

4. Increase employer engagement in the regions to drive the uptake and funding of technical and professional apprenticeships in the creative sector

UAL is at the centre of the UK's creative industry: London, where a **Skills Roadmap for London**³⁹ features a **London Strategy for Culture (and associated Implementation Plan)**⁴⁰ has been developed by the Mayor of London to ensure investment in a diverse creative workforce for the future is delivered through the **Creative Londoners project**. Two specific policies apply:

- **Policy 12:** The Mayor will help more Londoners get employment in the creative industries
- **Policy 13:** The Mayor will help to increase diversity within the creative workforce.

The call to action across all London Boroughs is to support apprentices and the creative workforce.

BCU is also centrally positioned in the **West Midlands Combined Authority (WMCA)** region, where its 'Plan for Growth'⁴¹ names 'Creative Content Production and Gaming' as a key priority sector, where the authority aims to combine the private and public sectors to pump-prime regional activity outside of London, and to become the UK's fastest growing tech sector employing 76,000 people⁴².

Create Central will be part of the driver for BCU engagement, where the next phase of **WMCA's Create Growth Programme (CGP)** will help the creative sector to scale and access investment⁴³.

BCU and UAL have the opportunity to support employers in the creative sector, and across London and the West Midlands, to access up to 50% of BCU and UAL's unspent levy funds. This opportunity could be promoted not only via the Levy Pledge system, but actively promoted via the local councils, LSIPs and Mayoral offices.

By pledging funds, BCU and UAL has the opportunity to open up dialogue with employers and training providers in the creative sector and in the vicinity of BCU and UAL, which in the future could be a route to marketing BCU and UAL qualifications and now, providing apprenticeship training in the capacity of a main provider.

Here the careers and employability services at both universities could also serve very useful with their direct links to training providers offering arts and creative qualifications or as routes to employers seeking to recruit talent from BCU and UAL.

Here co-promotion of BCU and UAL's ability to fully fund apprentices and, via a trusted set of training providers, would open doors to greater FE and training provider engagement, and build relationships with employers across a much broader geographical remit, thereby identifying better evidenced apprenticeship progression routes and delivery modes which BCU and UAL might consider in the future.

Whilst the opportunity to offer apprenticeship funding is relatively simple as a levy transfer, BCU and UAL will need to consider how it will facilitate the requests for funding and the ensure checks are carried out to retain BCU and UAL's unused levy funds in either the creative sector or in their respective regional footprints.

³⁹ Skills Roadmap and other strategies | London City Hall

⁴⁰ Date (london.gov.uk)

⁴¹ Plan for Growth (wmca.org.uk)

⁴² Creative & Digital Technologies | Invest West Midlands

⁴³ Create Central chosen to lead West Midlands creative business growth programme (wmca.org.uk)

With the introduction of the 'flexi-Job' apprenticeship model, there is also a potential future opportunity for BCU and UAL to apply for funding to become a 'flexi-job agency' to employ apprentices, and build on the employability, careers and placement teams' expertise to deliver apprentices in organisations for periods of no less than 3 months. However, additional expertise would be needed to drive forward an application, and to ensure apprenticeship and funding regulatory and compliance requirements were met.

Equally, BCU and UAL could consider partnership with those piloting such apprenticeships, perhaps with the BBC and ScreenSkills who have recently undertaken these pilot schemes.

The engagement of high quality and regionally active training providers, from both the FE and independent training provider sectors, should be explored. Through engagement and partnership there are greater opportunities to support corporate and social responsibility agendas, with the opening and access to new teaching facilities and teaching support to drive up the quality of the apprenticeship experience for apprentices, employers and collaborating local training providers, thereby offering a smoother route into technical, higher technical and professional apprenticeships.

No matter the type of apprentice, there will be a need to **coordinate and liaise with local training providers** to ensure apprentices can be trained, which in itself will start to build relationships with external training providers, with an aim to engaged them in potential plans to support the development of progression routes into and the format of training needed in relation to higher level apprenticeships that BCU and UAL may consider offering in the future.

In choosing one or all of these options, BCU and UAL will see a return on investment from increased numbers of learners on programmes, greater number of student placements, improved graduate career prospects and destination statistics, and greater levels of employer and broader engagement and enterprise activity – this should be considered as a value add to strategic priorities, and a driver to meet regional and local skills criteria and BCU and UAL's own levy spend.

Summary

Bringing forward investment in apprenticeships for the creative sector at both BCU and UAL, will support greater focus and leadership on the technical, higher technical and professional apprenticeships, and the models of delivery that better suit the creative sector, thereby delivering the skills needed by industry and improving employment opportunities for both apprentices, and graduates from each respective university.

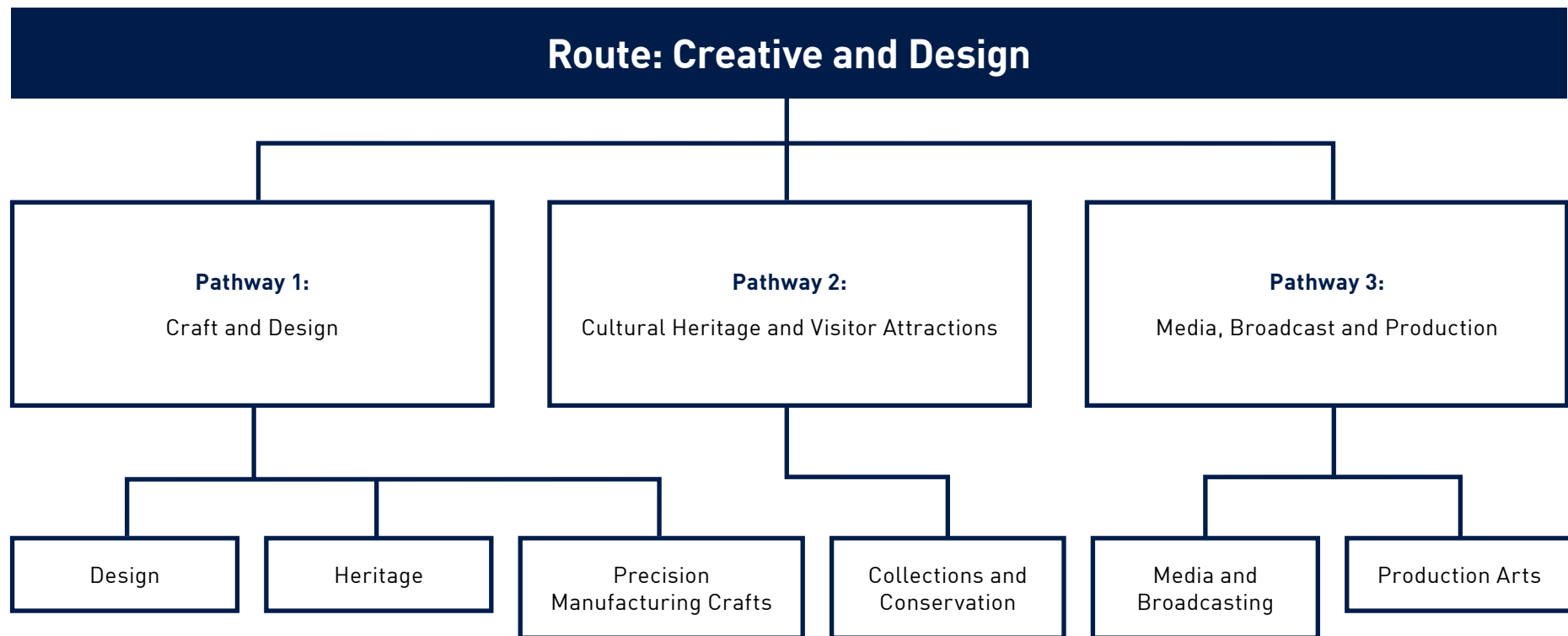
Apprenticeships also open up major **opportunities for the universities and their stakeholders**, which following qualification reform will need to consider a pipeline of new qualifications in development for 14 to 19-year-olds (T-levels) and Higher Technical Qualifications (HTQs), and a qualifications revision cycle that needs to be undertaken to meet regulatory requirements and exploit commercial opportunities. **Apprenticeship qualifications and end point assessment should be part of this work**; and with IfATE policy in relation to mandatory qualifications within apprenticeships, the expertise within both universities and their awarding body partners, will be essential to success and to ensuring any future apprenticeship delivery by BCU and UAL has appropriate **Quality Assurance and Enhancement (QAE)** processes in place.

Through a strategic partnership project focused on apprenticeships at the higher technical and professional levels, both BCU and UAL will be able to expand the organisations each work with to create positive change, and to collaborate with businesses of all sizes, local communities, policymakers, charities and other universities, harnessing the power of creativity and innovative thinking to co-create value for society, the economy and the environment.

ANNEX A:

Apprenticeship Occupations Available in the Creative and Design Route

The Creative and Design industry route is currently split into three different pathways, where apprentices can be collated to offer greater clarity on career paths. At this time, the three career pathways are:



These are then split into the individual occupations, as follows:

Route: Craft and Design				
Pathway	Apprenticeship	Technical Occupations (level 3)	Higher Technical Occupations (level 4 and 5)	Professional Occupations (level 6 and 7)
Design	Available	Assistant Puppet Maker (L3) Fashion Studio Assistant (L3) Hair, Wigs, Make Up and Prosthetics Technician (L3) Scenic Artist (L3)	NIL	NIL
	In Development	NIL	NIL	Interior Designer (L6) Living and Commercial Spaces Designer (L6) Model Maker (L6)
	Potential in Future	Craft assistant - Ceramicist Prop Maker	Textile Designer	Costume Designer Fashion Designer Graphic Designer Production Designer

Route: Craft and Design				
Pathway	Apprenticeship	Technical Occupations (level 3)	Higher Technical Occupations (level 4 and 5)	Professional Occupations (level 6 and 7)
Heritage	Available	Bespoke Furniture Maker (L3) Bespoke Saddler (L3) Blacksmith (L3) Garment Maker (L3) Jewellery, Silversmithing and Allied Trade Professional (L3)	NIL	NIL
	In Development	NIL		NIL
	Potential in Future	Hair and Wig Maker Milliner	Journeyman Bookbinder (L5)	NIL

Route: Craft and Design				
Pathway	Apprenticeship	Technical Occupations (level 3)	Higher Technical Occupations (level 4 and 5)	Professional Occupations (level 6 and 7)
Precision Manufacturing Crafts	Available	Clockmaker (L3) Watchmaker (L3) Spectacle Maker (L3) Organ Builder (L3)	NIL	NIL
	In Development	Furniture Restorer (L3)	NIL	NIL
	Potential in Future	NIL	NIL	NIL

Route: Media, Broadcast and Production				
Pathway	Apprenticeship	Technical Occupations (level 3)	Higher Technical Occupations (level 4 and 5)	Professional Occupations (level 6 and 7)
Production Arts	Available	Costume Technician (L3) Creative industries production technician (L3) Props Technician (L3)	NIL	NIL
	In Development	Scenic Automation Technician (L3)	NIL	NIL
	Potential in Future	Live Event Rigger (L3)	NIL	NIL

Route: Media, Broadcast and Production				
Pathway	Apprenticeship	Technical Occupations (level 3)	Higher Technical Occupations (level 4 and 5)	Professional Occupations (level 6 and 7)
Media and Broadcasting	Available	Broadcast and Communications Technical Operator (L3) Camera Prep Technician (L3) Content Creator (L3) Junior Advertising Creative (L3) Production Assistant Screen and Audio (L3) Publishing Assistant (L3)	Assistant Recording Technician (L4) Audio-visual Technician (L5) Broadcast and Media Systems Technician (L5) Journalist (L5) Junior Animator (L4) Junior Visual Effects – Assistant Technical Director (L4) Media Production Coordinator (L4) Photographer (L4) Postproduction Technical Operator (L4)	Advertising Creative (L6) Broadcast and Media Systems Engineer (Degree) (L6) Creative Industries Production Manager (Degree) (L7) Outside Broadcasting Engineer (Degree) (L7) Senior Journalist (L7) Storyboard Artist (L7) VFX Artists or Technical Director (L6) VFX Supervisor (L7)
	In Development	NIL	NIL	NIL
	Potential in Future	NIL	3D Artist Camera Assistant Deputy Stage Manager Stage Manager Lighting Assistant Music Technologist Sound Assistant Physical Special Effects Technician Prosthetic Make Up Artist	Animator Cinematographer Head of Lighting Head of Sound Sound Designer Lighting Designer Producer

Route: Cultural Heritage and Visitor Attractions				
Pathway	Apprenticeship	Technical Occupations (level 3)	Higher Technical Occupations (level 4 and 5)	Professional Occupations (level 6 and 7)
Collections and Conservation	Available	Archaeological Technician (L3) Cultural Learning and Participation Officer (L3) Museum and Galleries Technician (L3)	Cultural Heritage Conservation Technician (L4) Historic Environment Advice Assistant (L4)	Archaeological Specialist (L7) Archivist and Records Manager (L7) Cultural Heritage Conservator (L7) Curator (L7) Historic Environment Advisor (L7) Registrar (Creative and Cultural) (L6)
	In Development	NIL	NIL	NIL
	Potential in Future	NIL	NIL	NIL

There are also apprenticeships relevant to the creative sector in other routes, such as Digital and Marketing and Retail. Of those relevant, these are:

Route: Cultural Heritage and Visitor Attractions				
Pathway	Apprenticeship	Technical Occupations (level 3)	Higher Technical Occupations (level 4 and 5)	Professional Occupations (level 6 and 7)
Digital Services Pathway and Digital Production, Design and Development Pathway	Available	NIL	Digital Community Manager (L4)	Creative Digital Design Professional (L6) Digital User Experience (UX) Professional (L6) Game Programmer (L7)
	In Development	NIL	NIL	NIL
	Potential in Future	Digital Content Administrator	Digital User Experience (L4) Games Designer (L4) Gaming Audio Engineer (L4) Video Games Quality Assurance Technician (L4) Digital content manager (L4)	NIL

Route: Sales, Marketing and Procurement				
Pathway	Apprenticeship	Technical Occupations (level 3)	Higher Technical Occupations (level 4 and 5)	Professional Occupations (level 6 and 7)
Marketing Pathway and Sales and Retail Pathway	Available	Advertising and Media Executive (L3) Event Assistant (L3) Marketing Assistant (L3) Multi-Channel marketer (L3)	Marketing Research Executive (L4) Marketing Executive (L4) Buying and Merchandising Assistant (L4) Retail Manager (L4)	Digital marketer (L6) Marketing Manager (L6) Assistant Buyer and Assistant Merchandiser (L6) Retail Leadership (L6)

ANNEX B:

Further detail on Individual Apprenticeship Occupations, Training Provider and End Point Assessment Organisation Information

The following tables (first table for levels 4 and 5, second table for Level 6 and 7 occupations) includes the following information:

- Occupation Title
- IFATE occupational standard reference number
- Typical duration of training (not EPA)
- Funding band allocation
- Detail on qualifications (where relevant)
- Whether the occupation is under review by IfATE
- Number of training providers
- List of EPA organisations (EPAOs)

Higher Technical Occupations (levels 4 and 5)	Code, Typical Duration, Funding Band	Technical Occupations (level 3)	Number of Training Providers
Publishing professional (L4)	ST1442; 24 months; £10k	1 provider	No EPAO
Photographer (L4)	ST1388; 18 months; £8k	1 provider	Aim Qualifications and Assessment
Junior visual effects - VFX artist or assistant technical director (L4)	ST1325; 18 months; £10k	1 provider	Aim Qualifications and Assessment
Stained glass craftsperson (L4)	ST0912; 36 months' £27k	1 provider	Institution of Conservation
Assistant recording technician (L4)	ST0944; 24 months; £10k	3 providers	Aim Qualifications and Assessment
Media production coordinator (L4) – under review	ST0792; 18months; £8k	4 providers	Aim Qualifications and Assessment / Innovate Awarding Limited
Junior animator (L4) – under review	ST0488; 18 months; £11k	1 provider	Aim Qualifications and Assessment
Historic environment advice assistant (L4)	ST0749; 24 months; £10k	2 providers	The Chartered Institute for Archaeologists
Postproduction technical operator (L4)	ST0696; 12 months; £9k	2 providers	Aim Qualifications and Assessment

Apprenticeships in the Creative Sector

Higher Technical Occupations levels 4 and 5	Code, Typical Duration, Funding Band	Technical Occupations (level 3)	Number of Training Providers
Cultural heritage conservation technician (L4) – under review	ST0611; 24 months; £9k	2 providers	Institution of Conservation
Digital community manager (L4)	ST0345; 24 months, £13k	5 providers	Aim Qualifications and Assessment / BCS, The Chartered Institute for IT
Market Research Executive (L4)	ST0883; 18 months; £8k	3 providers	Innovate Awarding Ltd / NQUAL LTD
Buying and merchandising assistant (L4)	ST0683; 18 months; £6k	4 providers	Fashion and Retail Awards Ltd / Innovate Awarding Ltd
Marketing Executive (L4)	ST0596; 15 months; £6k	50 providers	Chartered Institute of Marketing / 1st For EPA; The British Institute of Recruiters
Public relations and communications assistant (L4)	ST0311; 14 months; £11k	13 providers	Aim Qualifications and Assessment / 1st For EPA
Commercial Procurement and Supply (L4) - Under Review	ST0393; 24 months; £9k	26 providers	Chartered Institute of Procurement and Supply / VTCT Skillsfirst / Explosive Learning Solutions Ltd
Retail Manager (L4)	ST0325 / 12 months / £5k	335 providers	9 EPAOs
Higher Technical Occupations levels 4 and 5			
Audio-visual technician (L5)	ST0940; 24 months; £18k	4 providers	Aim Qualifications and Assessment
Journalist (L5)	ST1324; 14months; £13k; Mandatory Qualification listed	5 providers	NCTJ Training
Postproduction Engineer (L5)	ST0933; 24 months; £14k	1 provider	No EPAO
Broadcast and media systems technician (L5)	ST0425; 24 months; £15k	3 providers	Aim Qualifications and Assessment
Bespoke tailor and cutter (L5)	ST0055; 24 months; £17k	1 provider	Skills and Education Group Awards

Apprenticeships in the Creative Sector

Professional Occupations (L6 and L7)	Code, Typical Duration, Funding Band	Number of Training Providers	EPA Organisations
Advertising Creative (L6)	ST1340; 24 months; £17k; Non-Degree	1 provider	No EPAO
VFX artist or technical director (L6)	ST0902; 18 months; £11k; Non-Degree	No providers as no EPAO	No starts allowed due to no EPAO
Registrar (creative and cultural) (L6)	ST0590; 36 months; £16k; Non-Degree	No providers	Aim Qualifications and Assessment
Broadcast and media systems engineer (L6)	ST0426; 36 months; £24k; Integrated Degree Apprenticeship	2 providers	Birmingham City University / Ravensbourne University
Living and commercial spaces designer (in development)	ST0965; TBC	TBC	TBC
Model Maker (in development)	ST1317; TBC	TBC	TBC
Interior Designer (in development)	ST1361; TBC	TBC	TBC
Creative digital design professional (L6)	ST0625; 36months; £25k; Integrated Degree	5 providers	4 EPAOs
Digital user experience (UX) professional (L6)	ST0470; 48 months; £24k; Integrated Degree	5 providers	3 EPAOs
Assistant buyer and assistant merchandiser (L6)	ST0668; 24months; £10k; Non-Degree	3 providers	Fashion and Retail Awards Limited
Retail Leadership (L6)	ST0547; 48 months; £22k; Integrated Degree	2 providers	2 EPAOs
Marketing Manager (L6)	ST0612; 24 months; £9k; Non-Degree	11 providers	1st for EPA Ltd / Chartered Institute of Marketing
Digital Marketer (L6)	ST0481; 36 months; £21k; Integrated Degree	15 providers	14 EPAOs

Apprenticeships in the Creative Sector

Professional Occupations (L6 and L7)	Code, Typical Duration, Funding Band	Number of Training Providers	EPA Organisations
Archivist and Records Manager (L7)	ST0904; 36 months; £12k; Non-degree	1 provider	CILIP Pathways
VFX Supervisor (L7)	ST0901; 18 months; £21k; Non-Degree	1 provider	AIM Qualifications and Assessment Group
Senior Journalist (L7)	ST0286; 18 months; £14k; Non-degree; Mandatory Qualification is listed	6 providers	NCTJ Training
Historic Environment Advisor (L7)	ST0831; 36 months; £15k; Non-degree	No providers as no EPAO	No starts allowed due to no EPAO
Curator (L7)	ST0782; 36 months; £12k; Non-Degree	1 provider	AIM Qualifications and Assessment Group
Storyboard Artist (L7)	ST0489; 18 months; £15k; Non-Degree	No providers as no EPAO	No starts allowed due to no EPAO
Creative industries production manager (L7)	ST0525; 18 months; £8k; Non-Degree	2 providers	Aim Qualifications and Assessment / Innovate Awarding Limited
Archaeological Specialist (L7)	ST0769; 36 months; £15k; Degree	2 providers	The Chartered Institute for Archaeologists
Cultural heritage conservator (L7)	ST0628; 54 months; £27k; Degree	No providers	Institution of Conservation
Outside Broadcast Engineer (L7) - Under Review	ST0342; 12 months; £9k; Integrated Degree	No providers	No EPAO
Game programmer (L7)	ST0953; 24 months; £19k; Non-Degree	2 providers	Innovate Awarding Limited

ANNEX C:

Apprenticeship Starts and Qualification Achievement Rates on Creative Route Occupational Standards

Levels 4 and 5

Name	Reference	Level	Starts (Full Academic Year)						Total	Qualification achievement rates (%) - where available	
			2017/18	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23		2021/22	2022/23
Publishing professional	ST1442	4							0		
Photographer	ST1388	4	Low	Low	Low	Low	Low	Low	0	No data	No data
Junior visual effects	ST1325	4							0		
Stained glass craftsperson	ST0912	4							0		
Assistant recording technician	ST0944	4	Low	Low	Low	Low	Low	Low	0	No data	No data
Media production coordinator	ST0792	4	Low	Low	Low	Low	40	60	100	No data	87.5
Junior animator	ST0488	4	Low	Low	Low	Low	10	Low	10	No data	No data
Historic environment advice assistant	ST0749	4	Low	Low	10	Low	10	Low	20	66.7	No data
Post production technical operator	ST0696	4	Low	Low	10	10	10	20	50	No data	No data
Cultural heritage conservation technician	ST0611	4							0	No data	No data
Total			0	0	20	10	70	80	180		
Audiovisual technician	ST0940	5	Low	Low	Low	Low	Low	20	20	No data	No data
Journalist	ST1324	5	Low	Low	Low	Low	50	70	120	No data	87
Post production engineer	ST0933	5							0	No data	No data
Broadcast and media systems technician	ST0425	5	Low	Low	10	Low	Low	Low	10	No data	71.4
Bespoke tailor and cutter	ST0055	5	10	Low	Low	Low	Low	Low	10	No data	No data
Total			10	0	10	0	50	90	160		

Levels 6 and 7

Name	Reference	Level	Starts (Full Academic Year)						Total	Qualification achievement rates (%) - where available	
			2017/18	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23		2021/22	2022/23
Advertising Creative	ST1340	6								No data	No data
VFX artist or technical director	ST0902	6							0	No data	No data
Registrar (creative and cultural)	ST0590	6							0	No data	No data
Broadcast and media systems engineer (integrated degree)	ST0426	6	Low	10	10	20	10	20	70	No data	No data
Creative digital design professional (integrated degree)	ST0625	6	Low	Low	Low	Low	30	50	80	No data	No data
Digital user experience (UX) professional	ST0470	6	Low	Low	Low	40	70	100		No data	No data
Total			0	10	10	60	110	170	150		
Archivist and records manager	ST0904	7	Low	Low	Low	Low	Low	Low	0	No data	No data
VFX supervisor	ST0901	7							0	No data	No data
Senior journalist	ST0286	7	Low	Low	Low	10	20	70	100	No data	No data
Historic environment advisor	ST0831	7							0	No data	No data
Curator	ST0782	7	Low	Low	Low	Low	Low	30	30	No data	No data
Storyboard artist	ST0489	7								No data	No data
Creative industries production manager	ST0525	7	Low	Low	Low	Low	10	10	20	No data	No data
Archaeological specialist (degree)	ST0769	7								No data	No data
Cultural heritage conservator (degree)	ST0628	7	Low	Low	Low	Low	Low	Low	0	No data	No data
Outside broadcasting engineer (integrated degree)	ST0342	7	Low	Low	10	Low	Low	Low	10	No data	No data
Game programmer	ST0953	7	Low	Low	Low	Low	10	30		No data	100
Total			0	0	10	10	30	110	160		

ANNEX D:

Extract from the Creative Skills Monitor 2020⁴⁴ in relation to Apprenticeship Findings

Question	Finding
Awareness and Uptake of Apprenticeships	<p>Nearly 9 out of 10 (88%) of employers in the Creative Industries are aware and have at least some knowledge of what is involved in offering Apprenticeships (or are currently offering them). This is at the same level as for employers across the whole economy.</p> <p>This knowledge does not translate into widespread take up. Indeed, only 5% of employers in the Creative Industries employed at least one apprentice.</p> <p>Whilst a further 5% offered Apprenticeships, they did not actually employ any apprentices at the time of the survey.</p> <p>The level of engagement in the Creative Industries is therefore low, and, also well below the level across the whole economy (i.e. 11% of all employers nationally employed apprentices and 7% offered them).</p> <p>Employers interest with Apprenticeships is more likely to have been initiated by the employer themselves (59% in the Creative Industries compared to 54% for employers across the whole economy), and less likely to have been initiated by individuals outside the business (only 22 of creative industries were influenced by others).</p>
Apprentice Uptake by Employer Size	The likelihood of employers in the Creative Industries engaging with Apprenticeships increases with employer size, so that only 6% of the smallest (those with 2 – 4 employees) are engaged compared to 23% of the largest (those with 100+ employees).
Apprentice Uptake by Subsector	There is considerable variation by sub-sector, ranging from 2% in the Music, performing and visual arts through to 22% in the Museums, galleries and libraries.
How are apprenticeships being used in the workplace?	Two thirds of employers in the Creative Industries offering Apprenticeships, the opportunity was only provided to new employees, rather than existing workers, though for about a third of employers they are offered to both.

⁴⁴ PEC-Skills-Monitor-FINAL-July-2020.pdf (assets-servd.host)

Question	Finding
<p>Employer Engagement in Apprenticeships</p>	<p>38% of employers across the economy have been involved with Apprenticeships for more than five years, compared to 16% in the Creative Industries.</p> <p>Around a quarter of employers (24%) in the creative sector have been offering Apprenticeships for a year or less and a further 35% have been involved for more than a year but less than 3 years.</p> <p>By comparison, only 39% of employers across the whole economy have been involved for less than 3 years.</p>
<p>Apprenticeship Training Provision</p>	<p>53% of employers in the Creative Industries, who offer Apprenticeships, provide a mix of training based at the company and through a training provider. This is lower than the national picture where nearly two thirds of employers provide blended training.</p> <p>In addition, a further 38% of employers in the sector offer Apprenticeship training only through a provider or only through formal company training.</p> <p>Those employers in the Creative Industries who used external providers were asked what type of training provider delivered their Apprenticeship training. Most used a commercial training provider (just over half).</p> <p>Apprenticeship employers in the Creative Industries are less likely to use FE colleges (37%) than employers across the economy as a whole (i.e. 52% of all employers).</p> <p>More Apprenticeship employers in the Creative Industries who had arranged external training for their Apprentices had been involved in its design and development than nationally – 62% compared to 55% the whole economy.</p> <p>In the majority of cases (46%) this involvement was to develop or tailor the content of existing external training provision to make it suitable for their needs. This may offer helpful insights into how to enhance in future programme offer.</p>
<p>Are apprenticeships a good way to train staff?</p>	<p>57% of employers in the Creative Industries who deliver Apprenticeships do so as they regard them as a good way to get skilled staff (which was higher than the national average at two fifths of all employers).</p> <p>A fifth of employers in the Creative Industries wanted to give young people a chance in employment. As such, some employers were actively using work placements to identify candidates for Apprenticeships.</p> <p>Indeed, 22% of employers in the Creative Industries offering work placements, had used the placements to understand whether an individual was suitable for an Apprenticeship prior to their recruitment.</p> <p>But these employers are still a significant minority.</p>

Question	Finding
<p>What are the benefits of apprenticeships?</p>	<p>Those who are already engaged have strong reasons for offering Apprenticeships in future.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • These include the programme being a good way to: • access skilled staff (36%); • meet the expansion of the business (27%); • and to help people get into work (with 23% stating that they are a way to give young people a chance in employment and 20% to get young people into the industry).
<p>Why don't employers use apprenticeships?</p>	<p>The most common reasons included that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • they are not suitable because of either the size of the establishment (25%); • they are not looking to recruit new staff (18%); • they don't suit the business model (11%); • apprenticeships are not offered for their Industry (11%); • all their staff are fully skilled (11%); • or they prefer to recruit experienced staff (11%).
<p>Future intentions towards apprenticeships?</p>	<p>A quarter of employers in the Creative Industries stated intentions to offer Apprenticeships in the future, but perhaps more worrying for policy makers 59% do not (this compares to 30% and 54% respectively of employers nationally).</p> <p>Of those that do plan to offer Apprenticeships in the future, most intend to do so within a short time frame – 64% intend to do within the next two years.</p>



ANNEX E:

Government's 2030 skills objective for the Creative Sector (Goal 2): Stronger skills and career pathways generate a workforce that meets the industry's skills needs⁴⁵

Headline actions

- DfE and DCMS will work with industry, including through ministerial roundtables, to better understand the opportunities and challenges facing creative apprenticeships. This work will improve SME engagement, the quality of specialist training provision, the relevance of standards for creative apprenticeships and the effectiveness and sustainability of the Flexi Job model. (DfE, DCMS) (England only)
- The government will work with the creative industries nationally and locally to ensure they are well placed to take advantage of future procurement opportunities for Skills Bootcamps in England. These provide a fast-paced, targeted route for adults to retrain and upskill and employers to fill live vacancies at intermediate skill level through courses lasting up to 16 weeks. (DfE) (England only)
- DfE and the Institute for Apprenticeships and Technical Education (IfATE) will work with industry, specialist educators and employers to input into the Post-16 Level 3 and below qualifications review to ensure that - where technical and academic qualifications in the creative sector are necessary alongside T-Levels and A-Levels - they meet the principles of being high-quality, employer-led with a focus on good progression outcomes. (DfE) (England only)
- The Skills for Jobs White Paper announced the development in 2023 of 38 employer-led Local Skills Improvement Plans (LSIPs) to identify the priority changes needed to reshape technical skills provision to better meet the needs of employers and the wider economy. LSIPs, which have statutory underpinning, will be accompanied by £165 million of funding (until March 2025) to help colleges and other providers respond to the priorities identified in LSIPs including in the creative sector. (DfE) (England only)
- We will continue to engage with industry to act on the findings and recommendations from the BFI's Film and High-End TV Skills Review, and the subsequent actions to be defined by the Screen sector Skills Task Force, which will include an agreed approach to ensuring an ambitious financial commitment is made by the industry towards training the existing and future workforce. (BFI, Industry) (UK-wide)

⁴⁵ Creative industries sector vision Annex A: summary of key actions - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk)

Additional interventions

- DfE will support industry to ensure the 2 new creative T-Levels rolling out in 2024, including the placement element, are high quality and responsive to demand. (DfE) (England only)
- As we develop skilled talent across the UK, Home Office (HO), DCMS and industry will work together to maximise the effectiveness of existing immigration routes for the creative industries workforce, including freelancers and consider creative industries in future immigration reforms. This includes improving industry's understanding of, and engagement with, the full suite of inward mobility routes the UK offers. (HO, DCMS, Industry) (UK-wide)
- By 2025, we will have rolled out Higher Technical Qualifications (HTQs), which are new and existing level 4-5 qualifications approved and quality marked by the IfATE. These will help to support creative industries relevant skills including through Digital HTQs that started being taught in September 2022, and Creative and Design HTQs that will start teaching from 2025. (DfE) (England only)
- We will ensure continued access to highly skilled talent from abroad by improving understanding of and engagement with the full suite of inward mobility routes. (HO) (UK-wide)
- The Department for Work and Pensions (DWP), DCMS and industry will work together to boost opportunities for utilising employment programmes to progress people at risk of unemployment into creative roles. (DWP, DCMS, Industry) (UK-wide)
- The government - including the Unit for Future Skills - will work to improve the availability of official data on the creative industries to inform actions and interventions through to 2030. Together with industry, the government will develop a labour market framework for understanding and tracking changing skills across the creative industries. This will draw on assessments of current and future skills needs for each creative sub-sector, undertaken within the next 12 months and coordinated by the Creative Industries Council (CIC). This follows the example of the BFI's Film and High-End TV Skills Review and the Design Council's Design Economy research. (DfE, DWP, DCMS) (UK-wide)
- The BFI is delivering c. £20 million per annum over this spending review period to support growth, exports and storytelling in the UK's screen sector and promote the UK's screen heritage. This includes c. £19 million in grant-in-aid from DCMS and c.£1 million from DfE for the BFI Film Academy (BFI, DCMS) (UK-wide)
- The Scottish Government will deliver the Creative Future Programme in partnership between XpoNorth and the University of the Highlands and Islands, that brings together industry and students to support course development and provide young people with placements, mentoring and advice to make them work ready and to address future skills gaps. (Scottish Government) (Scotland only)
- As part of its Programme for Government, the Welsh Government is prioritising the creative workforce through their Creative Skills Body and Action Plan. (Welsh Government) (Wales only)

- The Welsh Government is supporting creative skills through its apprenticeship model tailored to the Welsh workforce, its freelancers pledge, and its annual fund, which will be supporting 17 projects with £1.5 million this year. (Welsh Government) (Wales only)
- Creative Wales is also supporting skills and job quality initiatives such as the National Film and Television School in Wales, Culture Connect Wales, Beacons Cymru, and the Well-being Facilitator roles. (Creative Wales) (Wales only)
- The Northern Ireland Executive is committed to supporting creative skills and is working with Northern Ireland Screen, Arts Council of North Ireland, and stakeholders to build pathways to creative careers and support digital upskilling. (Northern Ireland Executive) (Northern Ireland only)
- The Northern Ireland Executive's 2022 Covid Recovery Employment and Skills Initiative has provided £9 million to support new entrant employment and training opportunities in the arts and creative industries. (Northern Ireland Executive) (Northern Ireland only)
- Northern Ireland Screen's integrated strategy prioritises creative education and skills development alongside industry investment and maximising cultural value, including support for unique Moving Image Arts GCSE and A-Level qualifications, and industry led careers programmes designed to address skills gaps. (Northern Ireland Executive) (Northern Ireland only)



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