



Studying craft:
trends in craft
education and training
Summary report

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www.craftscouncil.org.uk

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1. Foreword

Education and training in crafts is of wide-ranging importance: it produces makers of the future, prepares those with craft skills for the wider creative economy and beyond, and develops the haptic and creative skills so important for all young people and their learning. The Crafts Council's goal in this report is systematically to explore what has been happening in craft education and training in recent years, combining an analysis of the trends over a five-year period with case studies to illuminate those patterns. Our objective is not only to increase our understanding, but also to contribute to the debate about how best to secure creative education in general, and craft education in particular, through all levels of our education system.

The Crafts Council's research¹ regularly examines the place of contemporary craft in the creative economy, exploring the career experiences and contribution of makers within industry, education and community settings (for example, **Craft in an Age of Change**² and **Crafting Capital: New technologies, new economies**³). Craft is one of the most entrepreneurial of all the creative industries sectors: 88% of all makers set up their own businesses⁴ and a further 6% work in business partnerships.

We commissioned TBR and Pomegranate to undertake this report at a time when there has been a groundswell of interest in craft. We were keen to secure a strong evidence base and to drive debate about the importance of craft education and training in a climate of rapid and continual reform. Given the importance of craft to society and the economy these findings reveal some worrying declines in art, craft and design but they also point to new directions for the sector to explore. The report acknowledges the government's drive to increase engagement by employers in education at all levels, yet highlights the need for new mechanisms to enable a sector dominated by sole traders and micro-enterprises to participate effectively.

We are working closely with makers, educationalists and partners in the art, craft and design community to respond to the rich findings in this report and to make the case for relevant, high quality education and training. The Crafts Council is working with partners to build a manifesto for education to drive a thriving and innovative craft sector, which we hope will complement the development of its new strategy by the Department of Culture, Media and Sport's Creative Industries Council.

We would like to thank the researchers, our steering group (in particular Lesley Butterworth of the National Society for Education in Art and Design and Ian Farren from Plymouth College of Art) and all those who have contributed their knowledge and insights to the case studies.

We have raised a number of questions in the report, to government, to partners and to the sector. Addressing these questions will be crucial if craft is to fulfil its potential contribution to the UK growth agenda. Declining participation and provision pose risks not only to our domestic and international economy, but also to the value of haptic and material skills beyond individual craft disciplines. We urge you to share the summary report widely and to use the full report and extensive data workbooks which we have made available on our website: www.craftscouncil.org.uk

We need imagination, creativity and ambition to develop appropriate skills and to sustain the ecology of provision needed to support makers in the current landscape as well as to support the wider importance of craft and making to society. The Crafts Council will be insistent in its ambition to promote high quality education and training in craft.

**Professor
Geoffrey Crossick**
Chair, Crafts Council

Rosy Greenlees
Executive Director,
Crafts Council

February 2014

2. Executive Summary

2.1 Introduction

The aim of **Studying craft: trends in craft education and training** is to provide a comprehensive review of contemporary craft education in England, examining all stages of formal education and training from Key Stage 4 to postgraduate study (see the table below). The study considers trends in the provision of and participation in craft courses for the last five academic years for which consistent data are available: 2007/08 – 2011/12 inclusive.

Craft is a core component of the UK's thriving creative industries, employing over 100,000 people and showing an above average increase in gross value added between 2008-2012⁵. In addition to this economic value, craft is also a vital and increasingly popular aspect of the nation's social and cultural life.

Significant change has continued in the education and training system since the general election in 2010, with reform across all stages from primary to Higher Education (HE). The government remains committed to ensuring that children and young people receive a cultural education⁶, a point recently reinforced by the Culture Secretary, Maria Miller⁷:

'We all know our children have to leave school equipped to face a competitive world, with certain core skills. And that includes having developed a sense of their culture and having their creativity encouraged [...] the arts remain a core component of any child's education. They are a must-have not an add-on.'

The continuing exclusion of art and design from the English Baccalaureate (Ebacc) performance measure⁸ creates a situation in which the value of arts within a young person's education is potentially diminished in the eyes of parents/carers, and young people themselves. This is reflected in our case study 'Decline in GCSE participation' (page 11.), which also suggests that a concern among parents and children is that arts subjects are 'hard work and time consuming', with the potential to detract from academic performance in other subjects.

While school remains 'the single most important place where children learn about Cultural Education'⁹, it is also vital to consider progression pathways and routes into a career in craft. Our findings point to the importance of ensuring that there are reliable and consistent pathways between the different education stages to act as the building blocks for young people's progression.

The Crafts Council's 2012 research **Craft in an Age of Change** highlights the significance of post-compulsory qualifications to craft professionals, with 87% of makers in England holding craft-related qualifications¹⁰. Access to appropriate qualifications is crucial if makers are to take full advantage of education opportunities.

A key element of the government's qualification reforms is a move to boost employer engagement in qualification development and the delivery of education and training. This is a particular challenge in a sector dominated by sole traders and microbusinesses, where the capacity to engage is limited and access to knowledge and understanding of the education infrastructure is not straightforward. At the same time there are few incentives for education providers to identify and engage with microbusinesses when larger employers are likely to be more accessible.

2.2 The offer and take-up

The following sections of the summary report explore the offer and take-up of education and training and the trends revealed by the data at each education stage, set alongside observations from the case studies.

Table 2.1 summarises the stages of education, age ranges and qualifications considered in this report.

Table 2.1: Stages of education and training by age range and typical qualifications

| Stage | Age range | Typical qualifications |
|---------------------------------------|-------------------|---|
| Key Stage 4 | 15–16 years old | GCSEs |
| Key Stage 5 / 16–18 Further Education | 16–18 years old | AS-levels, A-levels |
| Apprenticeships | 16 years and over | Intermediate Level, Advanced Level and Higher Apprenticeships |
| Further Education (adults) | 18 years and over | Qualifications and Credit Framework units |
| Higher Education | 18 years and over | Foundation degrees, Bachelor degrees, Masters, PhDs |
| Community Learning | 19 years and over | Qualifications and Credit Framework units |

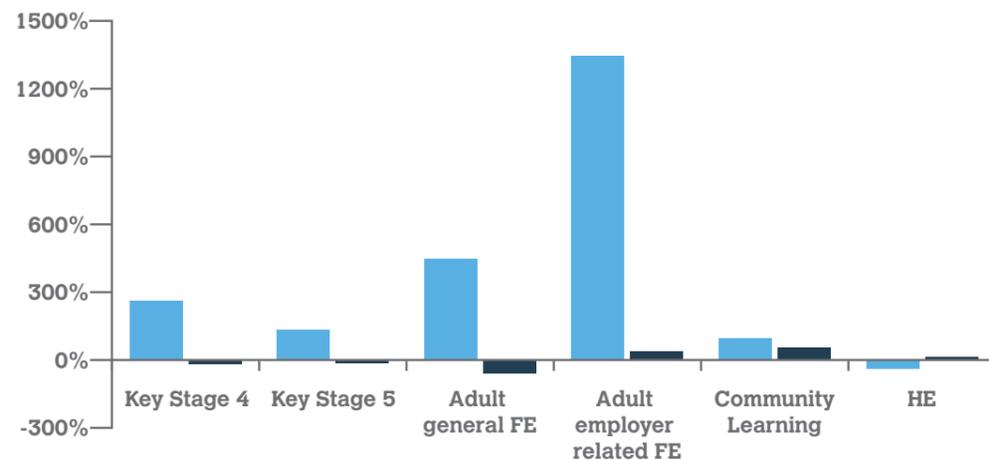
Full details on method are provided in the appendix of the full report.

Figure 3.1 sets changes in course provision against those in participation. The chart excludes apprenticeships which operate at multiple education stages. The data describe a craft education offer that has expanded significantly over the period at all levels except Higher Education. Total participation has remained relatively steady, between 610,000 and 680,000 learners over the period. However, underneath these top line numbers are fluctuations across each education stage, reflecting the introduction of new policies and qualification frameworks and, in some cases, shorter courses.

Figure 2.1: Change in provision and participation by stage of education¹¹

■ All craft courses
■ All craft learners

Sources: LAD, LARA, UCAS, NPD, ILR, HESA (TBR ref: W7/C5)



2.2.1 Key Stages 4 and 5

Increases in provision across Key Stages 4 and 5 – and Further Education (FE) – have mainly been driven by the unitisation of qualifications, following the introduction of the Qualifications and Credit Framework (QCF) in 2010. Over this time period the design and technology GCSE was also re-structured. This has led to a proliferation of options in terms of short courses and units available to study at Key Stages 4 and 5, but also has the effect of driving discipline specialisation from an early age, when it could be argued that experiencing a broader range of disciplines would be beneficial. This issue is reflected

in our case study ‘Unitised courses’ (page 16), which shows that as schools specialise and reduce the range of skills and materials covered in their curriculums, FE colleges are increasingly seeking to broaden the range of skills offered in order to support students’ decisions on specialisation as they progress through education.

In spite of the increase in craft units available to study at Key Stage 4, participation is decreasing. Participation in all GCSEs fell by 4% across the time period covered by the report, but the fall in craft was greater. Participation in craft-related design and technology GCSEs fell by 19% between 2007/08 and 2010/11 to 290,000 learners at the end of Key Stage 4. Participation fell in all subjects, but most significantly in graphic products (29%) and resistant materials technology (26%). Research by the Cultural Learning Alliance¹² suggests participation in design and technology GCSEs has continued to fall in 2012/13.

At Key Stage 5 the majority of participation in craft courses takes place at school sixth forms, rather than FE colleges. School sixth forms accounted for 89% of learners in 2010/11. Across the period 2007/08 to 2010/11 the number of 16–18 year olds participating in Key Stage 5 craft courses in any institution fell by 15%. This was driven by a decline in FE participation (37%) with a much slower rate of decline in sixth forms (3%). Figures from the Joint Council for Qualifications¹³ suggest a further drop in participation in design and technology A-levels in 2012/13.

Section 6.1 of the main report examines Key Stage 4 in more detail, while section 6.2 looks at Key Stage 5.

2.2.2 Further education

FE funding distinguishes between provision available to and/or organised independently by the participant (known as ‘general’ FE) and that which is undertaken via an employer (‘employer-related’ FE).

Although general FE provision in craft has increased at three times the rate of all other general FE provision, participation has declined by 58% over the period of the study. Increases in provision are mainly at Levels 2 and 3. By contrast, participation in employer FE has fluctuated and ultimately increased (an overall percentage change of 38%) and growth in craft employer related FE courses has far outstripped general FE over the five years. However, there are only very small numbers of learners (650 in 2011/12) and the growth in numbers is at only half the rate of growth across all employer provision. The majority of these new courses have been developed at Entry Level, Level 1 and Level 4, with a growing trend towards units which are shorter in length. This has had the effect of broadening the employer related offer, but reveals a gap in investment by employers in progression to Levels 3 and 4. This gap may reflect the challenges for FE colleges and microbusinesses of effective engagement with each other.

The case study ‘Adults and participation in FE craft courses’ (page 17) reinforces the fact that the majority of participation in FE is about entry to the profession, either for those changing career, or as a step on the ladder to Higher Education. The case study also highlights, contrary to expectations, how the introduction of advanced learning loans for adults has had an enabling effect, making courses more accessible. A high proportion of participation is part-time in one of the case study colleges, where students are combining education and paid work. These findings underline the importance of clear signposting to explain how FE can support new entrants as well as skills development for those already working in the craft sector.

Section 6.3 of the main report considers general FE in more detail. Section 6.4 examines employer-related FE.

2.2.3 Apprenticeships

Formal Apprenticeship frameworks have historically been available in a small number of craft disciplines. Since 2007/08 a number of frameworks have disappeared, most notably in ceramics. While some new formal frameworks have been introduced, they are available only in textiles (including fashion and textiles), furniture, jewellery and silversmithing craft disciplines (as well as in craft-related theatre design). More are currently in development, but it is very common for craft guilds and associations to run independent apprenticeships, which are more difficult to account for in a research exercise such as this.

The number of 16–18 year olds in craft-related Apprenticeships has fluctuated each year, but was broadly similar in 2011/12 to the number in 2007/08 (400). Most 16–18 year olds are engaged in Intermediate Apprenticeships (81% in 2011/12). The proportion in Advanced Apprenticeships grew from 15% to 19% over the period of the report, but fluctuations in learner numbers do not suggest a trend of rising participation at this level. The absence of Higher Apprenticeships is a gap in provision, which acts as a barrier to diversifying entry routes. In this context, it will be interesting to observe the impact and take-up of the Higher Apprenticeships in craft that are to be developed in Wales by Creative & Cultural Skills.

Apprenticeships are considered in more detail in section 6.5 of the main report.

2.2.4 Higher education

The only education stage that has seen a decrease in the number of courses available is Higher Education. The overall decline across the five years is 39%, down from 820 courses in 2007/08 to 500 in 2011/12. Proportionately, the greatest loss is in 'other' undergraduate programmes (including foundation degrees, HNCs/HNDs, etc.), which dropped by 79% (from 100 to 20 courses), but the largest absolute number was in bachelor degree programmes, 230 of which were closed between 2007/08 and 2011/12. Rather than a steady decline in provision over the period, the majority (210) closed between 2009/10 and 2010/11.

The decline in the availability of craft HE courses over the period of the study is of particular concern in specific disciplines. The number of ceramics and glass courses has fallen by 67% to 15. Most ceramics-specific courses are located in the South West, having all but disappeared in other regions. The number of glass-specific courses has fallen to just one, available in the South East. Other glass-specific courses in the South East, and in other regions, have disappeared. One combined glass and ceramics course is available in the North East. Courses offering ceramics and glass routes alongside other disciplines also appear to have become less widely available¹⁴.

Higher education participation

In direct contrast to the closure of courses, participation in Higher Education craft courses has increased by 14% over the five year period. The increase has been steady at both undergraduate and postgraduate levels, with numbers rising incrementally year on year. The increase at postgraduate level has been larger: 33% compared to 13% at undergraduate level. However, the absolute numbers demonstrate the dominance of undergraduate programmes, with 20,300 undergraduate students in 2011/12 compared to 1,600 postgraduates.

Across both undergraduate and postgraduate, the proportion of overseas students is increasing; the number of non-UK domiciled undergraduate students increased by 46% over the five year period and 79% for postgraduates. At both levels, there was a sharp increase in the number of overseas students between the 2008/09 and 2009/10 academic years.

Undergraduate

As might be expected, bachelor degrees remain the most popular method of undergraduate study in terms of numbers participating. However, the data show that while

the number of learners on bachelor degree craft courses rose (13%, from 16,300 to 18,300), the increase in the number of learners on 'other' undergraduate craft courses, such as foundation degrees or HNCs/HNDs, was higher (22%, from around 1,700 to around 2,000).

It is interesting to note that the take-up of 'other' undergraduate routes increased at a much greater rate for people from black and minority ethnic (BME) backgrounds (58% compared to 16% of other undergraduates over the five years). There was also an increase in BME participants in bachelor degree programmes, though not at the same rate (18% compared to 9%).

Historically, participants on 'other' undergraduate routes were more likely to be older. However, the increase in participants on these programmes is now driven by young people under 24 whose rate of participation has gone up by 59% over the five years, compared to 17% on bachelor degrees.

This increase in take-up of 'other' undergraduate programmes by young people and those from BME backgrounds suggests that they offer an important route to diversifying the sector. In addition, the lower fees charged for 'other' degrees suggest that the importance of this pathway is likely to increase.

Postgraduate

The increase in participation in postgraduate programmes has been driven by masters degrees, with an increase of 40% over the period. In contrast to undergraduate level, participation in 'other' postgraduate courses (such as postgraduate diplomas or certificates) decreased between 2007/08 and 2011/12 (down 53% to only 25 participants). This may demonstrate an increase in the importance of the dissertation as an element in craft study at postgraduate level.

A small proportion of postgraduate students are studying for doctorates (100 out of 1,460 in 2011/12) and this figure has remained relatively steady, increasing from 90 in 2007/08¹⁵. Where doctorates are undertaken, they appear to be strongly related to individual expertise within an institution and/or they build on traditional geographical specialisms, for example, ceramics and glass in the North East.

As might be expected, postgraduate learners tend to be older than undergraduates, with 45% in 2011/12 aged 24 or under (compared to 91% of bachelor degree students) and 38% aged 25–34 (compared to 5% on a bachelor degree). The age profile for postgraduate study reflects in part its position as the 'final' stage in the stream of formal education. (Where students start a masters degree directly after graduating, they are likely to be at least 21). However, the fact that 38% of masters students and 63% of doctorates are aged 25–34 on beginning a programme suggests that many may be using a masters to develop/refine skills while combining with work. This perception is supported in our case study 'Student recruitment in crafts subjects at postgraduate level' (page 24). In terms of preparation for entry to the sector, our case study 'Higher Education courses, employability and the local craft economy' (page 22) also suggests that career development tends to be much more a feature of undergraduate courses.

Relatively few postgraduate students are from BME backgrounds compared to undergraduate level. In 2011/12, 13% of masters learners were from BME communities. The rate of increase for BME participants is slower on masters programmes than those from other backgrounds (4% increase between 2007/08 and 2011/12 for BME participants, compared to 12% for other groups). Only two doctoral students were from a BME background in 2011/12, up from one in 2007/08.

Section 6.6 of the main report looks at Higher Education in more detail.

2.2.5 Community learning

Community learning (commonly referred to as adult learning) is often a key starting point for those looking to start a second career in craft and is thus an important component of the training landscape for the sector. As might be expected, learners tend to be older:

more than half (57%) are over 50.

The number of courses available in all community learning subjects increased by 395% between 2007/08 and 2011/12. The rate of change in craft has been much slower, with a comparative increase of 97% in the courses available. However, craft community learning engages a considerable numbers of learners. Just under 240,000 people participated in craft courses in 2010/11, up from 150,000 in 2007/08 - an increase of 56%, set against a 1% decline in all subjects¹⁶. This reinforces the point that there is strong overall demand for craft community learning.

Community learning is examined in section 6.7 of the main report.

2.3 Gender

Gender balance is an issue that cuts across all education stages in craft. Gender stereotyping in discipline choice appears to be embedded from the very outset of engagement in educational pathways in craft¹⁷. At Key Stage 4, male learners outnumber female learners in graphic and products subjects and especially in resistant materials technology (where young women accounted for 15% of learners in 2010/11). Female learners outnumber male learners in art and design subjects and especially in textiles technology subjects (where young men accounted for just 3% of learners in 2010/11). Taken together with the finding that the number of white learners has fallen in HE, this suggests that there may be a particular issue with young, white male participation at this initial stage.

Data suggest that there may be a link between gender and mode of study. In most cases participation is in a female: male ratio of 80:20. However, male participation in 'other' undergraduate programmes has increased by 35% between 2007/08 and 2011/12, compared to 18% for females, to a point where the gender balance is progressing towards 30:70 male: female, rather than 20:80.

There is also a tendency towards higher levels of male participation in FE, evidenced in the finding that young women are decreasingly likely to study craft in an FE college at Key Stage 5. Historically, young women have outnumbered young men on these craft courses. However, the number of female learners has fallen by 48%, while the number of male learners dropped by 20%. By 2011/12, young men accounted for 51% of learners, up from 40% in 2007/08.

2.4 Key issues

The findings in the report raise a number of issues which demand serious debate within the craft sector as well as in government, education institutions and with wider partners.

- The following factors are currently shaping secondary education: short term policy shifts, changes to education funding arrangements and the introduction of new qualification structures, performance measures and inspection frameworks. The modular approach to GCSEs is being phased out which may result in a decrease in provision over the next five years. Alongside this, it is likely that as long as arts subjects remain outside the Ebacc performance measure (and therefore are not prioritised by parents or the school inspection framework) participation will continue to decrease. Except for those schools which feel they have a strong mandate to deliver an arts education, the risk is that the education system is moving to a position where young people have little to no exposure to in-depth arts and are reliant on parental knowledge and support to access this. There will also be a reduction in vocational education.
- The introduction of new education establishments – Academies, Studio Schools and University Technical Colleges (UTCs) – will play a role in future debate. These new types of school could provide alternative routes for craft. The Studio School and UTC featured in our case studies (pages 13 and 14) both offer a model for craft learning that brings together creative and practical learning with business skills. Taking advantage of these approaches while they are still in the early stages of development represents both an

opportunity and a challenge to the craft sector.

- The relationship between the craft sector and FE will be important to explore. The number of courses is increasing, yet participation is falling and the length of courses is steadily reducing. This decline is a significant change in the training landscape for craft, suggesting that far fewer makers are using FE as a route to invest in skills development. The small numbers of people undertaking employer related FE is probably to be expected in a sector dominated by sole traders. Yet this raises the question of whether there is sufficient appropriate support available to makers as employers, in order for them to take advantage of education and training opportunities in their businesses.
- The development of a craft Apprenticeship framework is welcome and should both enhance provision in the sector, and diversify entry routes. Our case study 'Apprenticeships' (page 18) considers both the conversion of an independent framework (supported by Creative & Cultural Skills) and also the experiences of an organisation participating in a formal framework through the Creative Employment Programme. Though not without challenges, these are clearly rewarding programmes both for the employers and the apprentices. They highlight the benefits of working with the sector to formalise routes and promote the benefits of working with apprentices.
- The provision and participation figures for HE sit uneasily alongside each other. While provision has been cut across the board, HE remains the dominant mode of study. The rise in international students coming to the UK to study craft at HE level suggests that the student body will increasingly be drawn from overseas. Yet the increase in overseas students in Higher Education may be masking an underlying issue of decreasing participation in the pathways leading to Higher Education, a risk to the a risk to the pipeline of future makers in the UK.
- The availability of effective careers advice and guidance in schools may be an issue for the sector. The choice of education pathways appear may be influenced by pragmatic decisions about which subjects are most likely to get the student a job. The challenge for the craft sector is that future makers are more likely to be seeking to start a business than looking for a job on leaving education. Enabling young people and parents to access accurate careers information on the business of craft is therefore crucial.
- The cost of craft courses is high compared with other art and design provision, not least because of the equipment and space needed. The survival of craft-based subjects such as ceramics and glass at undergraduate level may depend on those assets being "protected" by affiliate subjects, or by a broader-based approach to art and design. There is a risk that only a few, specialist centres will be viable. Good facilities in adequate space and a local cultural identity are central to attracting postgraduates in a climate in which specialist courses may come to be the exclusive terrain of PhDs.
- HE is demonstrating progress in engaging a diverse student body in studying craft. The most accessible routes for people from BME backgrounds are 'other' undergraduate degrees, but these are small in number and declining rapidly; the least accessible routes are postgraduate programmes. BME participation at undergraduate level, however, is increasing at above average rates, which suggests a widening of access and a positive outlook in terms of greater diversity in craft practice.

2.5 Next steps

The research has raised a number of key issues that the Crafts Council and partners, both within the sector and in education, will need to work together to address. The development of a manifesto for education led by the Crafts Council is a starting point for the sector in addressing the need for accessible, consistent and high quality education and training pathways to enable the sector, and the economy, to continue to diversify and grow.

3. Policy timeline

Table 3.1: gives an overview of the key policies impacting on education and training since the general election in 2010.

| Stage | 2010 | 2011 | 2012 | 2013 | 2014+ |
|---|--|---|---|--|--|
| Schools | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> — Academies Act enables all maintained schools to apply to become Academies¹⁸ — Proposals invited from groups interested in setting up Free Schools¹⁹ | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> — Proposals invited from groups interested in setting up University Technical Colleges and Studio Schools²⁰ — Pupil premium introduced²¹ | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> — Education Funding Agency established to fund all 3–19 education²² — Schools' duty to provide independent careers guidance for Years 9 to 11 is introduced²³ — First teaching of two-year linear GCSE — New Ofsted school inspection system²⁴ — Pupil premium extended²⁵ | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> — Plans for English Baccalaureate Certificate (EBC) and single exam board/subject scrapped — 14–19 Diplomas withdrawn — Duty on young people to continue in education or training until age 17 introduced²⁶ — DfE publish Cultural Education document summarising access opportunities for schools and teachers²⁷ | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> — New National Curriculum comes into effect in 2014²⁸ — Introduction of Technical Baccalaureate (TechBacc) measure from 2014²⁹ — First teaching of new GCSEs September 2015 and 2016³⁰ — First teaching of new A-levels from September 2015³¹ — Pupil premium set to rise³² |
| Further Education, Adult Learning and Apprenticeships | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> — Government skills strategy published³³ — Qualifications and Credit Framework introduced⁴⁸ | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> — Wolf Review of 14–19 vocational education published³⁴ — Recommendations of Wolf Review accepted in full³⁵ | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> — New common inspection framework for colleges and work-based learning providers³⁶ — Richard Review of Apprenticeships published³⁷ — Apprenticeship Grant for Employers (AGE) available to eligible employers of 16–24 year olds — of 16–24 year olds³⁸ — Requirement for an Apprenticeship Agreement between employer and an apprentice in place³⁹ | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> — Government updates its skills strategy⁴⁰ — New 16–19 funding formula used from 2013/14⁴¹ — 16–19 study programmes introduced⁴² — 14–19 Diplomas withdrawn — Introduction of 24+ advanced learning loans⁴³ — Recommendations of Richard Review accepted and implementation plan published⁴⁴ — First Trailblazers set up to develop new Apprenticeship standards and assessment approaches⁴⁵ — FE colleges able to enrol 14–16 year olds to vocational qualifications⁴⁶ — Traineeships introduced⁴⁷ — Advice for all post-16 education and training providers on post-16 work experience published⁴⁸ | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> — Tech Level and Applied General qualifications ready for teaching from 2014⁴⁹ |
| Higher Education | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> — Browne Review of HE funding and student finance published⁵⁰ | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> — Government publishes HE reform plans⁵¹ | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> — University tuition fees increased to maximum of £9,000 — Introduction of the National Scholarship Programme⁵² | | |

4. Case studies



'The Clay Olympics', part of the student-led celebration of the London Cluster of Firing Up, May 2012 © Sophie Mutevelian

4.1 Changes in education infrastructure: Academies

Secondary school provision is increasingly delivered through Academies, which are “publicly-funded independent schools [that]... don't have to follow the national curriculum and can set their own term times”⁵³. Based on an interview with a member of the senior management team at an Academy in the Midlands, this case study explores the impact of Academy status on craft provision, how that provision relates to the school's development plan, the impact of government policy on take-up of craft at exam level and the relationship between craft, science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM) and the digital agenda⁵⁴.

The case study school became an Academy in April 2012. Its rationale included “managing our own budget... more independence from the local authority” and “personalising learning for the student”. The school currently provides for Years 10 to 14. From September 2014 it will also admit students from Year 7. It was never intended that Academy status would alter “the status quo”, and it hasn't particularly impacted on craft provision. Although art, design and technology are “valued” by the management team, the school's development plan doesn't

specifically mention craft, nor is there an art, design and craft ‘champion’ among the governors.

To date, the EBacc⁵⁵ has made little difference to art and craft, which are “still popular... students value the creative outlet and pursuing something they enjoy”. Parental attitudes can be more challenging: “getting gifted and talented students, who are also able in academic subjects, to take A-level art and design is a battle”. The department addresses this by promoting the range of careers available in art, design and technology; displays at Options Evenings; subject “heroes” – successful former students; bringing in local makers and creative people to talk to students; students' visits to local colleges including participation in classes and in community art, craft and design projects.

Take-up in design and technology is down. Neither graphic design nor A-level product design are offered anymore. This is partly due to the loss of teaching expertise, but also because “students are more interested in art... they want to draw, paint and make... [they're] not so interested in learning about the industry side”. Consequently, connections to STEM “are not as great as they could be”.

The change in the IT curriculum and the use of IT in teaching are having a

major impact across the school. All Year 7 students will have iPads, not textbooks. Staff are researching, using and testing learning and assessment software. They are currently photographing students' artwork, recording teacher comments and emailing video clip feedback to the students. Students are encouraged to use Pinterest to share work.

When the school was built in the late 1960s more than 20 different craft subjects were available, including silversmithing and blacksmithing. "The legacy is still here in the facilities" and adult evening classes were run. The school plans to reintroduce adult classes, starting with DIY/construction.

Today craft provision is located in the Department of Art, Design and Technology. Year 10 students can choose between art, textiles, product design, construction and catering. The school's marketing to potential Year 7 parents includes "enrichment" activities one afternoon a week to allow students to develop more personal learning that "doesn't necessarily fit with the curriculum". The subjects available include craft and design.

It is hoped that these activities will help to address the gender bias. This is "a huge issue" and has been exacerbated by feeder schools' tendency to suggest that "less academic girls take art, and boys take construction". All students from Year 7 will be taught art, design and technology and provided with subject advice and guidance, before they select GCSE options.

4.2 Decline in GCSE participation

Our evidence shows that participation in craft-related GCSEs fell by 19% between 2007/08 and 2010/11. Numbers had begun to fall before the latest reforms to the assessment of school performance. Learner numbers have fallen more in some regions than others: 29% in the North East and 12% in the South West. There is also a striking gender split across participation in particular subject areas, with more girls studying art and design and textiles, and more boys studying graphics and resistant materials. This case study is based on

perceptions of participation in GCSEs from a Head of Art in a school in the north of England. The school offers GCSE art, A-level art and design and BTEC art and design Level 2. It will be switching from the latter to applied art Level 2 from September 2014. Students work in a range of materials: clay, metal, textiles and mixed media. The school's new head teacher is enthusiastic about art: "It is valued, well received and the Head likes to see work round the school". The head of department also values students working with artists in school and in the community, although funding presents a challenge.

The fall in art and design take-up over the last few years is attributed to the EBacc: "Previously we might have had 50–60 GCSE art students. Now the average is about 40 and we have 35 students in the current Year 11", only eight of whom are boys. As of January 2014, only two students were planning to go on to A-level art and design. The current Year 12 has ten students, including those entering the sixth form from other schools. A number of those schools have become Academies, and established their own sixth forms. This may lead to an even smaller sixth form cohort. However, this year a number of students have chosen to study at the case study school specifically because the department has a good reputation.

It is also the case that students' perception of art as being "about hard work" has impacted on take up. The school is "quite academically driven" and students are aware of "pressure" and art is perceived as requiring "more work to achieve a result".

Parents' attitudes focus on employment: "what can you get with art and design? They aren't aware of the growth in creative industries or the range of jobs". The department seeks to influence parents' and students' attitudes through articles in the school newsletter, projects that run across the wider school partnerships with primary schools and taster sessions for Year 9 students that promote art, craft and design.

The department also goes through job specifications with Year 9 students to demonstrate career opportunities. The

school careers advisor was previously an art/textiles teacher, which "helps".

The school has good links with a college in the nearest city and a number of its students go on to do a Foundation Diploma before university. The interviewee encourages students to consider this option, which allows students to explore a wide range of practices and materials before deciding to specialise. The introduction of student fees in HE appears not to have affected the number taking this option.

All the Art Department's staff are women, which appears to have a negative effect on boys' choices. They are seeking to address this by introducing more 3D work, photography from Key Stage 3 and A-level photography in 2014/15.

4.3 Changes in education infrastructure: Studio Schools

Studio Schools are a recent development, intended "to address the growing gap between the skills and knowledge that young people require to succeed, and those that the current education system provides"⁵⁶. Their approach to learning "... includes teaching through enterprise projects and real work. This approach ensures students' learning is rooted in the real world and helps them to develop the skills they need to flourish in life"⁵⁷.

Studio Schools are intended to accommodate up to 300 students, aged 14–19 years old, of varying abilities. To date, 27 schools have opened, four of which have a creative specialism⁵⁸. Studio Schools are intended to "feel more like a workplace than



1. The Clay Olympics', part of the student-led celebration of the London Cluster of Firing Up, May 2012
© Sophie Mutevelian

2. New kiln installed at Woodchurch School, Liverpool cluster, Firing up, Year One.
© Jonathan Noake, Potclay Ltd

a school⁵⁹. They work closely with local employers, offer paid work placements, and open year-round with a 9–5 working day.

This case study is based on an interview with a Studio School Head teacher, based in the south of England. It explores current and future craft provision in relation to the school's curriculum, exam provision, development plans and performance assessment. The recent CFE Research report for the Arts Council England and Creative & Cultural Skills⁶⁰ considered that the teaching of arts subjects at Key Stage 4, specifically art and design GCSEs, could be improved by stronger links to STEM subjects and digital learning. The case study considers where these sit in the Studio School curriculum.

The school opened in September 2013 with 85 students in Years 10 and 12. Its Head describes the creative industries as “at the heart of what we do”. The School engages with craft in “the broadest sense” in the context of the performing arts and with textiles, fashion and design, in particular.

The school offers BTECs, GCSEs and A-levels across core academic subjects as well as a broad range of creative disciplines. Work placements account for a minimum 20% of the timetable. The school has a wide network of industry contacts: it aims to engage with the local creative economy, specifically. Students can also meet and learn from corporate senior management (examples include those from Deloitte and Bon Marché). Sessions taught on local university campuses help students to understand what progression to HE might involve.

All learning is project based and determined by a teaching method based on questioning, enquiry and problem solving. For example, its Key Stage 5 textiles students set up a Christmas pop up shop. This project based approach “fits with how industry works but has a ‘clunky’ fit with GCSE/A-level learning”. Nearly all students take a BTEC in enterprise and entrepreneurship, or an A-level in business studies. This approach, combined with a core academic and creative education, is intended to prepare students to enter industry directly

or set up in business.

The school closely associates STEM and digital learning with creative learning. For example, textiles and science are brought together in a protective clothing project. Where possible, students work to industry briefs.

The school's creative disciplines are already characterised by gender bias: its first year intake has more female than male students. This is likely to be exacerbated by changes at Key Stage 4 and reduced creative provision in their feeder schools: “More boys will take up science and maths, and not consider the creative route offered by the Studio School”.

Changes in secondary school accountability⁶¹ and the exam system present a particular challenge: by definition, the school will not be offering the English Baccalaureate⁶². It plans to offer core GCSEs in maths, English, science and computing science, plus a range of creative disciplines. The school has already raised its concerns about the contradiction implicit in its being set up to provide an industry focused curriculum linked to future employability, and the conventional school performance assessment.

4.4 Changes in education infrastructure: University Technical Colleges

The new University Technical Colleges “offer 14–19 year olds the opportunity to take a highly regarded, full time, technically-oriented course of study. They are equipped to the highest standard, sponsored by a university and offer clear progression routes into Higher Education or further learning in work... The students combine hand and mind to learn in a very practical way, integrating national curriculum requirements with the technical and vocational elements⁶³. By 2015, there will be 45 UTCs across England⁶⁴. Although the majority will focus on engineering and manufacturing, six are intending to promote creative, design and media alongside engineering and manufacturing specialisms⁶⁵.”

This case study, based on an interview with the Assistant Principal at a UTC in the



Milliner Emma Yeo in her studio at Cockpit Arts, London, December 2013
© Sophie Mutevelian

north of England, explores the college's engagement with craft, its qualifications, its links to STEM subjects and digital agendas, and career development.

The college opened in September 2013, in purpose built and equipped facilities, located close to a number of creative and cultural businesses. It has two specialisms; creative and digital media, and advanced engineering and manufacturing. These were “areas identified for growth in the region”. The college has strong links to industry through its business sponsors, industry-based staff, and businesses which work with its students. Three quarters of the governing body represent its industry specialisms. The UTC's teaching day is extended three days a week, to mirror the standard working day.

Students enter the college in Year 10 or Year 12. It currently has 218 students, out of a potential capacity of 600. The college is attempting to address the gender bias in engineering and parts of the creative and digital industry through its recruitment and marketing strategies. The student body, nevertheless, has fewer young women than men.

At the time of writing, no craft disciplines were being offered, but the college intends to do so if any “exciting and dynamic qualifications” become

available. The college has installed a kiln, and craft projects are in development. Future plans include offering ceramics. It proposes offering students what it refers to as “enrichment” activities, which will include jewellery and silversmithing, and work with local businesses and makers. The college is also considering how to address the crossover between creative and engineering specialisms – working with 3D printers, silver and plastics. The college is currently developing work in the areas of virtual reality and prosthetics with one of their university partners. Plans include creative and engineering students working with artists on a multimedia cultural heritage installation in and around the college.

The whole student body studies core academic subjects together and this accounts for 60% of students' time. Industry specialisms are taught separately.

The college currently offers a creative and media qualification, which is validated by an examination board perceived as being “responsive to local needs”. Our interviewee observed that “Examining boards are moving towards looking at what is appropriate and relevant to local need”. In addition to taking GCSEs and A-level art and design, students pursue industry-based projects with briefs that

have been set by the college's industry partners. As this implies, business and enterprise development is embedded in the curriculum. The college plans to offer the Technical Baccalaureate⁶⁶ and is reviewing its current offer for alignment with its requirements.

Students are expected to progress either to university or into industry.

4.5 Unitised courses

Our data indicates a significant increase in unitised provision as a result of the introduction of the Qualifications and Credit Framework. This case study is based on an interview with a Head of Design and Visual Arts at a college in the north of England and considers students' choice and access to unitised provision.

At the time of the interview (January 2014) the college was reviewing its design and visual arts provision and planning to change awarding body. It was, therefore, reviewing and selecting units for delivery.

The college has sufficient staff and facilities to offer a wide range of skills and materials. Its focus is on 3D, "which allows students to experience and develop a broad range of skills". Many local schools do not have the resources to offer students comparable opportunities. The college's Design and Visual Arts team "really value" the skills involved in handling different materials, designing, prototyping, testing and learning from failure. In one project students are set to work with ceramic and metal to design a lamp: 3D skills encourage students to use their senses to understand weight, feel and touch, and to appreciate the differences between 3D and 2D practice. "Without experience and knowledge, how can students decide what to specialise in?"

In reviewing the design and visual arts courses, the Department Head researched provision across the region. This revealed major course changes, largely as a result of costs. Few schools offer ceramics, and colleges appear to be placing less value on 3D provision. Some colleges are teaching in larger groups, which "makes effective 3D practice more difficult". The research also indicated that local schools were

unaware of the college's offer. The Head is now working with a school liaison group to address this.

In the college's consideration of qualifications offered by different awarding bodies, quality of assessment is an important factor. The requirement for an external referee is important, as is the emphasis in the core qualification design on generic education versus art specific with general education requirements. Learner feedback was also taken into account in the review.

The new awarding body offers links to a university and qualifications that are recognised by the art world. The linked university will come to the college to interview applicants. Many of the college's students come from economically challenged backgrounds, so raising students' aspirations and self-esteem is important. The college works with local universities to develop students' understanding of HE and the potential for them as individuals.

Careers advice is also important in encouraging students' ambitions, and the college provides opportunities for students to meet successful makers. Art and design students also progress to Apprenticeships or go straight into industry.

Looking to the future, the interviewee was concerned that changes in the school exam system and a reduction in arts would "inevitably depress colleges' intake of students interested in pursuing crafts". Another concern was that universities would take more students straight from A-level, which would affect the demand for a Foundation Year. The changes to funding for 18-plus⁶⁷ provision will potentially affect low-income students. Given the costs of equipment, materials and health and safety regulations, craft is one of the most expensive subjects on offer. The government is also concerned with space utilisation and maximising the number of students being taught in a given space. "On the one hand government says the creative industries are economically important and on the other there is a lack of recognition of the costs of provision".

4.6 Adults and participation in FE craft courses

Our evidence suggests a major drop in participation in general craft provision. This case study explores those trends. It is based on two interviews, one with a Head of Design and Visual Arts in an urban college in the north of England ('College N'); the other with a Head of Arts, Business, IT and Enterprise in a college in the south of England ('College S') with an urban/rural catchment area. The case study considers student participation and the impact on course content, teaching provision and student progression.

In contrast to College S, College N has not seen a decline in general adult participation in its craft qualifications. Most of its teaching provision is based in relatively poor, inner city areas. By comparison, College S's campus is based in

a considerably more affluent town, where there has been little sign of the recession. This college attracts students from a diverse area from the London commuter belt to more rural areas. Its students' backgrounds reflect a wide range from affluence to economic hardship.

College N had anticipated a decrease in the participation in their Level 3 Foundation Diploma in art and design, given the requirement for students' to apply for study loans themselves⁶⁸. Previously, their funding went to the college directly. But, those fears were unfounded: "This has not happened and student loans may have made the course more accessible as those that needed to pay can now get a loan".

College S, however has experienced a fall in the number of students registering for a Foundation Year prior to HE. The college attributes this to the increase in university



1 & 2. Glass by Michael Ruh, London, December 2013 © Sophie Mutevelian

fees. The Foundation course formerly had an average of 20 students aged 19 and over. “Currently there’s only one 19 plus student on the course who is self-financing”.

Although not relevant to adult FE, the college expects its Art and Design provision to be “hit hard” by the recently announced reforms to funding for 18 year olds⁶⁹. This is particularly the case for students currently going through Levels 1 to 3, who will be affected by the introduction of the change in September 2014. Those most likely to be affected will be from “socially and educationally deprived backgrounds”.

A drop in the numbers taking the Level 3 vocational diploma was attributed to “the low public visibility of the arts, and parents not being aware that the arts offer a broad base for a range of careers”. In the past, this course had cohorts of up to 80 students per year, but over the last three years it has tended to average 50.

Both colleges have witnessed an increase in the number of Eastern European, particularly Polish, students. At College N these increasing numbers are taking Level 2 general art and design, as are Chinese and African students. Those groups now account for as many as 50% of Level 2 students. That changing student profile reflects changes in the city’s demographic. The students themselves are predominantly part-time and in work. The adult evening classes at this college have a more white British ethnic profile.

Four years ago College N reshaped its Level 2 provision after recruiting some students who had been made redundant or were making a “life change”. College N introduced an art, design and craft course focused on rediscovering creativity, re-use and repair and retraining, business set up and sustainability. Alumni have gone on to establish their own businesses, or progress to Level 3 courses, Foundation Diplomas and Degrees.

Other changes to College N’s courses are being planned in response to an intention to change the awarding body for some provision. It regards its current course content as “too rigid” and is looking to a London-based awarding body with

“qualifications written by people in the arts”. It wants to buy “into the brand of London” and be associated with that awarding body and its partner institutions.

College S offers general provision rather than “endorsed, titled pathways”. This is proving effective in enabling it to protect both its teaching facilities and current skills base, because “teaching groups can be brought together, and expanded as needed”. It offers a range of provision, including pre-GCSE, Foundation, Higher National Diploma and general courses in which textiles, ceramics and metalworking are options alongside other art and media subjects. This allows students to specialise as they progress.

On a broader note, College N considered that more people were now interested in craft in response to “the over-manufacturing of goods ... people are going back to the arts and crafts movement and lots of people want to make things themselves and save money for example with garments and soft furnishings”. The region is also seeing a return to manufacturing.

4.7 Apprenticeships

Our evidence from qualifications data suggests that there are very few government Apprenticeship pathways. The aim of this case study is to consider other models and the role of guilds/craft businesses with regard to effective apprenticeships that are currently outside the national standards for Apprenticeship Frameworks.

4.7.1 British Artist Blacksmiths Association

The first part of this case study represents the responses to our findings by a representative of the British Artist Blacksmiths Association (BABA) with whom we discussed how a Guild or Association supports craft education.

BABA was set up in the 1980s, part of a general craft resurgence at the time. A strong network, it has over 600 members worldwide and runs an annual conference, website, magazine and newsletter. BABA supports skills development through

master classes and regular forge-ins – weekends of making and skills sharing.

The interviewee outlined a new Apprenticeship for blacksmithing, which has been developed by BABA in response to concerns about safeguarding craft training and skills. He reported that training exists through the college network in the form of BTECs. However, as funding has been reduced, the quality of these courses has been eroded. Course content has been reduced from 5 to 3 days a week and the hours of teaching per day reduced. As a result people entering the profession (either through employment or self-employment) have extremely varied skill levels.

Blacksmithing is a complex and multi-disciplinary trade and it was felt the best way to address these challenges was to create a workplace-based Apprenticeship with underpinning skills developed in college.

The process of Apprenticeship development was lengthy and complex. The first step was to identify a Sector Skills Council partner with whom to develop National Occupational Standards (NOS). Once identified, Creative & Cultural Skills led the process. Following the NOS development, they are now working with City & Guilds to develop the necessary qualification frameworks. It is hoped the subsequent Apprenticeship framework will be developed in time to launch later in 2014. The interviewee noted how difficult it is for a relatively small craft like blacksmithing to find its way through this lengthy and complex process. In addition, the relatively low take-up of qualifications can make it difficult to persuade agencies such as awarding bodies to undertake developments which may not be financially rewarding.

The proposed Apprenticeship will run for three years, and will be workplace-based with time out for training in college. Government funding for the Apprenticeship is given to the colleges who manage the process and award the qualification. The interviewee noted that the biggest challenge to Apprenticeship take-up will

be the challenge to employers (primarily self-employed or SMEs) in taking on an apprentice for three to four years, even on minimum wage. This is particularly true in the initial stages when the apprentice doesn’t generate much revenue and requires a great deal of support and training.

The interviewee suggested that, “The ideal Apprenticeship framework would be four years in duration, with a highly skilled and respected master craftsman, with block release at college and with a financial incentive for the employer, weighted more heavily at the initial stages”. He went on to say that “there is potential for many craft businesses to expand, but the initial cost of craft training puts employers off”. He noted that the Livery Companies Apprenticeship Scheme currently in development has the potential to direct funding to employers to support apprentices, and welcomed this development.

One issue raised by the interviewee was the requirement for qualifications to enter the Apprenticeship scheme – currently English and Maths at grades A*–C. There is potential for these schemes to miss out on individuals who were not engaged at school who, given the opportunity to practice a trade, might flourish.

4.7.2 Eastnor Pottery

The second part of this case study represents the responses to our findings by a representative of the Eastnor Pottery, with whom we discussed the new Creative Employment Programme.

Eastnor Pottery in Hereford is a small studio which operates a range of courses and workshops in clay – these include residential, one-day, recreational and children’s workshops and educational work in schools all over the East Midlands. They have engaged tens of thousands of participants.

Eastnor recently obtained funds from the Creative Employment Programme (CEP) to employ a full-time Community Arts Apprenticeship for a year. They have for some time employed a part-time assistant to help set up and run courses, deliver workshops, etc. However, the CEP has



Jon Williams © Eastnor Pottery
& The Flying Potter

enabled them to take on a full-time post. The apprentice is paid £4,500, with the scheme providing £1,500 towards the wage bill. This is just sufficient to make the post possible.

Shadowing others in the studio, the apprentice is initially working in a support role. He is working towards a Level 3 qualification through on-the-job learning and assignments administered by Creative Alliance, such as safeguarding children/adults, marketing, facilitation and book-keeping. In addition, as the apprentice arrived with no clay skills or skills on the wheel, as far as possible time is being devoted to helping him develop these.

The benefits to Eastnor pottery have been significant. The apprentice has brought fresh blood and ideas into the business and has opened up opportunities for the interviewee to do other things. He has more time available to find/create other income streams, to do some making and perhaps to produce a new range of pottery, which can be sold to course attendees to help support the business.

The interviewee explained, "We're a couple of months into the apprenticeship and although I'm investing a lot of time in training [the apprentice], it doesn't feel like an added responsibility and drain on my already stretched time and resources – in fact, I'm experiencing the complete opposite.

The business has never been busier, but having somebody around all the time to share tasks and experiences has induced a sense of calmness and probably increased my own personal effectiveness. Our apprentice is a quick learner and already has proved himself a competent thrower on the potter's wheel. This has led us to think about new products and we have already started to prototype a range of pottery items to be sold directly from the studio, the majority of making undertaken by the apprentice. This was not an anticipated outcome of the apprenticeship, but one we are enthusiastic about."

The interviewee identified the benefits to the apprentice as being that it is equivalent to a college course, but is in the workplace, is hands on, and he gets paid. Having previously struggled with writing, this more practical approach suits him better. The apprentice commented, "I see this apprenticeship as an entry level to get a job within the sector – a way in! I accept the low wages but am not deterred as it's such a great opportunity to gain experience".

One challenge of the programme has been the level of input needed in the early stages to support the apprentice's development. A significant concern for the sustainability of the scheme, therefore, is that it lasts only a year – and will come to an

end just as real benefits are beginning to be reaped. It is currently unlikely that Eastnor will be able to keep him, although they would like to, as they don't have the funds to do so. They hope that he might consider going to art college or university.

The interviewee identified that it is challenging to keep a business like this going – he feels a need to keep his foot on the accelerator, delivering courses to bring in income which doesn't allow time for personal making or reflection. It is difficult and time-consuming to find funding streams like these. He suggested it would be helpful to have a central resource to point small businesses to this kind of funding.

4.8 The perceived links between different stages in textiles education

Our evidence suggests that textiles provision is increasing at all educational levels, except in Higher Education: UCAS data suggests a decline in the availability of courses.

This case study considers differences in course content and provision in textiles across the education stages in the report. It is based on an interview with a Programme Coordinator of undergraduate textiles courses at a Higher Education Institute (HEI) in the Midlands.

Students' skills levels are seen to have changed considerably over the years. Previously, incoming students would have had some textiles experience before starting in Higher Education – crochet and knitting, for example. By contrast, some may now have acquired those skills at A-level, but others have no idea how to stitch or use a sewing machine. Incoming students also lack other competences that were previously the norm: "There has also been a steady decline in drawing activity in schools: the National Curriculum content has considerably reduced the requirement for drawing expertise and that has to be mitigated".

The teaching patterns in schools and Further Education encourage students' dependency "on spoon-feeding". Given the fees charged, students expect to get value for money and regard "being told what to

do" as indicative of that. Whereas previous generations were driven by a desire to explore textiles processes with little focus on outcome, current students approach HE qualifications as a route to employment.

This change is impacting on demand for textiles courses in Higher Education. It seems students are "migrating to visual communications and fashion courses, at this point in time", where it is perceived more jobs are available. The content and delivery of textiles courses changes in response to the market conditions.

"Remedial work" is now a necessary characteristic of the curriculum to develop students' knowledge and skills in those areas regarded as basic – specific textiles skills and more generic arts and design competences, such as drawing and mixing colours.

At the same time, craft courses are also subject to structural changes: shorter term times, reduced workshop access and less bought-in teaching. Workload models and centralised budgets mean that staff have less contact time with students – access to tutors and workshops is limited. Instead of providing individual and student-centred experiences, some HEI courses have become more prescriptive, structured, learning-orientated environments.

Our interviewee was, however, optimistic about the future for textiles. She cited the fledgling revival of British textile manufacturing, driven by fashion retailers' demands for "an ever faster response to consumer desires" and "costs rising abroad"⁷⁰. As she put it, "The UK textile industry is on the up. People are manufacturing more here. This partly has to do with sustainability; partly, heritage. There is evidence that production in some British companies is on the increase, and that will affect textiles provision in HEI". She thought that Vince Cable's recent speech about "a new dawn" for the textiles industry and his commitment to Government funding for employer-led training⁷¹ might also make a difference: "It's a matter of keeping an eye on the sector and pitching it right. Employment is a key factor now".



Lee Borthwick's studio, December 2013 © Sophie Mutevelian

The gender bias in this institution's textiles cohort was "... awful. In Year 1, there are two boys out of 66 – none in Years 2 and 3". Boys tend to gravitate to visual communication and fashion. "They're not necessarily aware of any male textile designers among their role models, with the exception of those involved in fashion, for example, Paul Smith". The prevalence of female students was attributed to schools, where "if anyone does sewing to a more advanced level, it's emphatically the girls".

4.9 Higher Education courses, employability and the local craft economy

Employability is a major issue for universities and other HEIs. Graduate employment records are included in the Key Information Set (KIS)⁷². Government not only expects HE to develop students' employability⁷³, but also to support local economic growth by working with businesses and through Local Enterprise Partnerships⁷⁴. This case study explores the approaches taken by one university in the south of England to students' employability and its relationship with crafts and tourism industries.

The university is located in a region with a strong craft and tourism economy. While first year students may not all appreciate

"the bonus" of the regional craft industry, "most do by the time they are in third year".

The career development programme features predominantly in the undergraduate rather than postgraduate courses. However, one of the MA modules, design and business, "looks at careers and business". The programme runs across its designer-maker, spatial and product design courses.

- All first year students develop a website and learn photography skills to market themselves and their work.
- Second year students are taught how to approach career development, and encouraged to participate in a national enterprise competition, where they compete as small businesses working with a business mentor to develop a concept, product, marketing and pitching. Second year students can opt for a module, which comprises a six-week work placement or an international exchange. Students are encouraged to make use of EU-funded student exchange programmes.
- The students are expected "to seek out new purposeful placements" for themselves or can draw on departmental knowledge, support and previous positions. Career skills development is timed to support students in pursuing

placements. Approximately 10 out of the 50 students do some kind of placement or work experience, and four to five students do exchanges in Japan and Europe.

- The third year students work on business planning.

Visiting speakers, including makers and local creative businesses, talk about careers and business development. The department engages with regional craft networks and local galleries where students exhibit work. One member of its teaching staff is on the Board of a locally-based, nationally recognised contemporary craft centre.

Graduate retention is not a particular issue for the department, which attracts students from across England. "Students tend to return to their home area after graduation for financial reasons", and may choose to set up in business there. Some students set up a business immediately on graduation, others will have a three/four day a week job and develop a business along side that. Some recent graduates have exhibited and sold at pop-up shops.

The university also provides specialised support for innovation and business development, which includes access (for a fee) to work space, business advice and specialists. It also promotes a lab-based model, intended to assist with developing commercial design collaborations, providing students with the opportunity to work on 'live' briefs.

As part of the course students consider tourist market potential. One of the third year projects involves designing small objects for multiple production, the aim of the project is to "develop a line of work that could be easily made/produced in a small workshop so to help financially while setting up". Students also visit the region's contemporary craft fair – one of the largest in the country.

4.10 The viability of craft courses in Higher Education Institutions

Our evidence suggests that the number of craft courses in universities is diminishing, particularly in core subjects. The overall number of courses available in the Midlands and North West fell by more than

50% between 2007/08 and 2011/12.

This case study represents the responses to our findings by two interviewees: one the Dean of a Faculty of Art and Design in a university in the north of England ('University N'); the other, the Head of School of Art and Design in a Midlands university ('University M').

Universities are concerned to promote the quality of their offer, their facilities, perceived value and graduate employment success rates – all of which may influence student choice. The quality of student experience is also a major consideration for universities and other HEIs. University N recently discontinued a postgraduate course, which had only recruited three students: "It wasn't just the economics, but the insufficiency of students to form a good, supportive, peer group".

Recruitment activities at University M indicate that undergraduates are more likely to seek a degree to enhance their employment prospects than those at University N. The prospect of employment was more pressing for postgraduates at both universities. Salaried jobs in crafts, 3D and design are few and far between, and practitioners are disproportionately likely to work in small companies.

Other strategic drivers include Local Enterprise Partnerships. Course validation at University N requires some reflection of local identities and the cultural infrastructure. But, while this is important on the supply side, the demand side may not be so responsive: the history of local potteries near University M is insufficient to stem the decline in undergraduate applications. At undergraduate level even "brilliant provision" isn't sufficient to stem the decline in student numbers: "Nowadays there are more kilns than there are students".

The demographics of the two universities' undergraduates are very different. University N is located in a city with a major student population. Its craft courses attract undergraduates from all over the UK. Only a small percentage comes from the city itself. Craft undergraduates at University M are predominantly local and many are from rural areas. Half to two thirds

commute from their family homes, often attracted by a specific course offer rather than the city itself.

University N's crafts applicants "have the highest tariff scores²⁵ in the university, they tend to be female and middle-class" and are motivated by "love of the subject". 3D design courses currently attract four to five applicants per place. In stark contrast, the majority of University M students "score low on the points scale" and are motivated by the opportunity to improve their employment prospects.

Both universities acknowledged a gender bias among their students. At University N this is particularly evident in textiles: over 90% of students are female. However, "What's positive is that we're getting more female students in graphic design. It used to be more like architecture is now. The only issue for us is whether the gender bias in our courses goes against the national trends". At University M ceramics, jewellery and creative arts' students are overwhelmingly female; those working in wood, principally male.

Craft courses are costly to run. Arts and creative technologies is the most expensive faculty at University M. Sharing costs across the faculty and supporting start-ups in ceramics, wallpaper, textiles, media and film production helps to mitigate costs. But amalgamation is always on the cards. At undergraduate level, ceramics is now presented as one component of 3D design – alongside plastics, metal and wood. University N, meanwhile, compared the cost of its craft courses to those of communications, design and media. The latter are "laptop-based" and require minimal space; crafts, by comparison, require specialist equipment and "are space hungry" in terms of workshops and storage. Existing facilities require maintenance and generate high technical costs, quite apart from any establishment costs (expensive hot glass equipment, for example). "Once the equipment goes, it's prohibitively expensive to replace. So we shrank book-binding, glass, letterpress and dark rooms". As a city centre campus, University N has no potential for expansion and its options are

determined by space.

However, at postgraduate level the picture is quite different: University M's reputation is a critically positive factor and its Masters course breaks even. Recruitment has improved over the past few years: students from China and Europe are attracted by the university's equipment and "artisanal", old-style, art school spaces. The department deliberately maintains its links with a number of local potteries. Some of its PhD students focus on local industry-based projects.

University N also reported that postgraduates were attracted by the facilities related to particular craft areas. Students also regard their university experience as a career route.

Both universities describe the future of their craft courses as uncertain: "It's currently a shifting landscape – things are resettling". Courses in University M may have to be less specialist, and broader ranging. At the time of writing, University N's focus was on marketing its new discrete postgraduate programmes in glass and ceramics. It is also developing new technologies which should drive craft's relationship with industry and stabilise numbers: "There's a call to reintroduce textiles manufacturing back to the city. Innovation is central to that. It won't be competitive in terms of volume or price, but it could produce bespoke quality". "Bringing digital in alongside materiality will help to change the image of the crafts, and bring it into the 21st century".

4.11 Student recruitment in crafts subjects at postgraduate level

Our evidence suggests that increasing numbers of overseas Masters degree students and those studying for doctorates are being recruited by universities and other HEIs outside London. But while provision in disciplines such as ceramics and glass is declining across England, there appears to be an increase in doctoral students in the north east. This case study considers what influences provision, demand and take up of postgraduate, craft-related opportunities.

The case study is based on an interview with the Team Leader responsible for the postgraduate MAs in Glass and Ceramics at a university in the north of England. The university is internationally recognised as a major provider of postgraduate degrees in glass and ceramics. It claims to be "the largest Glass and Ceramics Department in Europe". As such, it generally has a population of around 100 students, currently comprising about 60 undergraduates, 15 MA students and 30 PhD students.

The Department actively promotes itself. It has "excellently well-equipped studios" and world-class facilities, which include "26 glass kilns, a state-of-the-art water-jet cutter, a hot glass workshop, two cold working studios, a glass mould-making workshop, architectural glass studio and glass and ceramics print studio". Specialist teaching is provided by award-winning, internationally recognised artists. Their specialisms include glassblowing, print for glass, kilnforming, and digital fabrication methods. The staff also promote the department by organising and participating in international conferences. By definition, "staff are out and about". The university's Institute for International Research in Glass "promotes and facilitates glass research" and its Ceramics Arts Research Centre "aims to develop, support and disseminate new knowledge and scholarly activity while also providing a platform both practically and theoretically for discussion aligned to the ceramic arts".

Launching new courses requires market research, and validation by a panel comprising academics and industry representatives. The viability of courses ultimately depends on the number of students and the relative costs. Ceramics and glass share teaching across the two disciplines.

The number of postgraduate students has increased in recent years. This may reflect the fact that an increasing number of staff themselves hold PhDs, and the length of time for which the department has had block grant awards from the Arts & Humanities Research Council. There

have been times when all the full-time postgraduates have been international: currently overseas students account for the majority. Students' places of origin include Asia and Eastern Europe. But despite the fact that China, the Czech Republic and Slovakia all have national traditions of glass production, this appears not to be a major driver in prompting applications.

Recruitment does not necessarily depend on applicants' previous experience in glass. "The course has always been open to students from different artistic disciplines – painters, jewellers, graphic designers. Some have come from further afield – even engineering". Not all postgraduates have ambitions for a career in glass. Some come because "the staff are internationally known and because they are really committed to the subject, and want to get networked"; others, because the course allows them to "refresh their practice". However, students also regard getting a Masters qualification "as putting them in a higher echelon". In the case of more mature students, the qualification may mark a change of direction in life.

Masters courses are likely to be subject to greater financial pressures in the future. At the time of the interview (January 2014), the department had no hard plans for the future.

Gender bias was said to be evident in ceramics and glass at postgraduate level. Women were reported to account for about 80% of students.



5. Key data

Table 5.1:
Craft courses by stage of education and year

| Stage | 2007/08 | 2008/09 | 2009/10 | 2010/11 | 2011/12 |
|---------------------------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|
| Key Stage 4 | 85 | 181 | 237 | 321 | 309 |
| Key Stage 5 | 230 | 419 | 558 | 613 | 615 |
| Adult general FE | 230 | 423 | 590 | 650 | 1,304 |
| Adult employer-related FE | 61 | 85 | 113 | 174 | 881 |
| Apprenticeship frameworks | 5 | 6 | 7 | 10 | 10 |
| HE | 821 | 826 | 826 | 523 | 503 |
| Community learning | 291 | 481 | 644 | 696 | 572 |

Sources: LAD, LARA, UCAS (TBR ref: W7/C2). A total cannot be calculated as some courses are available in more than one stage.

Table 5.2:
Craft learners by stage of education and year

| Stage | 2007/08 | 2008/09 | 2009/10 | 2010/11 | 2011/12 |
|----------------------------------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|
| Key Stage 4 | 360,900 | 338,800 | 316,700 | 290,500 | ~ |
| Key Stage 5 – School Sixth Forms | 52,900 | 57,000 | 57,900 | 51,100 | ~ |
| Key Stage 5 – FE | 14,300 | 10,800 | 9,900 | 6,100 | 9,000 |
| Adult FE | 20,600 | 15,100 | 11,800 | 4,800 | 8,500 |
| Adult employer-related FE | 500 | 900 | 400 | 300 | 600 |
| Apprenticeships | 400 | 500 | 300 | 100 | 400 |
| HE – undergraduate | 18,000 | 18,600 | 19,400 | 19,700 | 20,300 |
| HE – postgraduate | 1,200 | 1,200 | 1,400 | 1,500 | 1,600 |
| Community learning | 150,900 | 235,100 | 248,800 | 236,100 | ~ |
| Total | 619,700 | 678,000 | 666,600 | 610,200 | ~ |

Sources: ILR, HESA (TBR ref: W7/C2). 2011/12 data is not available for Key Stage 4, Key Stage 5 and Community Learning. The total includes double-counting of learners who move between stages (e.g. from an FE college course to an Apprenticeship) within a year.

6. Notes

Hyperlinks to reference material, where available, are included in the electronic version of this report available from the Crafts Council website: www.craftscouncil.org.uk

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Glassmaker Michael Ruh in his studio, London, December 2013
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