



Studying Craft 2:
update on trends
in craft education
and training

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1. Introduction

The Crafts Council published **Studying Craft: trends in craft education and training** in February 2014. The aim of that report was to provide a comprehensive review of contemporary craft education in England. The report considered trends in the provision of and participation in craft-related courses for the academic years 2007/08 to 2011/12.

The findings informed our decision to work with makers, educators and industry on **Our Future is in the Making: an Education Manifesto for Craft and Making** (see our website www.craftscouncil.org.uk for more details). To coincide with publication of the Manifesto, this new report, **Studying Craft 2: update on trends in craft education and training**, sets out findings for the years 2007/08 to 2012/13, the latest period for which consistent data are available.

The update should be read alongside the earlier [series of reports](#) (an executive summary, including case studies, a full report and a data workbook), that sets out a full description of the context, analysis and methodology for the studies. This update report is accompanied by an updated data workbook. All reports can be found on our [website](#).

2. Key findings

Detailed findings for each stage of education are set out in the report.
A number of points stand out:

- A downward trend is apparent in overall numbers of craft learners since 2008/09. 85% of learners are in Key Stage 4 and in community learning.
- A decline in participation at GCSE is of particular concern, with learner numbers in 2012/13 25% lower than in 2007/08, compared with a 3% fall in the total number of GCSE students. This compares to a decline of 19% in participation between 2007/08 and 2010/11, noted in our earlier report. This marks a critical point for craft education: this downward trend is likely to reflect a reduction in opportunities for young people to engage in craft earlier in their education and it has potentially serious implications for the future pipeline of makers. In taking forward our Manifesto, we seek to reverse this decline.
- Participation in postgraduate higher education is rising but there is a fall in undergraduate student numbers (19,330 in 2012/13) to below 2009/10 levels (19,470). The pattern in postgraduate higher education contrasts with most other education stages, where available provision is delivered increasingly in smaller units but learner numbers are falling. (This study does not include 2012/13 data on the heritage of students. It is therefore not possible to comment on whether the higher rate of increase in recruitment of international undergraduates seen between 2007/08 and 11/12 has continued, compared to that of UK domiciled students. We also do not have updated data on the rate of increase in participation from ethnic minorities in HNDs, HNCs and 'other' undergraduate degrees, that we observed was higher than for other students between 2007/08 and 2011/12.)
- Trends in community learning and adult employer-related further education are very different. Both appear to be growing but, while relative increases in adult employer-related further education are large, numbers of courses and learners remain small.
- Participation in further education has been declining in both 16-18 and adult general further education, although there are possible signs of recovery in student numbers in 2012/13.
- Both adult employer-related further education and apprenticeships appear to offer limited opportunity for engagement with craft, although the Craft Apprenticeship Trailblazer is a welcome addition to apprenticeship opportunities.
- Community learning has a much larger cohort of learners, but attracts an entirely different demographic and is concentrated in short, relatively informal courses. Courses tend to attract an older age range, and may therefore attract returners to craft. However, courses may be informal in nature and have limited economic benefit for many learners.

Overall, the data continue to suggest a lack of opportunities for coherent progression between education stages. Learner numbers clearly demonstrate an appetite for engaging with craft and taking courses. However, the declining participation figures suggest both that there may be a reducing engagement with craft in Key Stages 1-3 and gaps in progression routes from Key Stage 4 to higher stages.

3. Background and context

Education and training in craft 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 series of reports is to explore what has been happening in craft education and training in recent years. 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 stages of our education system. Our Manifesto sets out a series of calls to action to help us work together to pursue this ambition.

4. Approach to this study

This section gives a summary of the method and approach to the report. Full details on the method are provided in the appendix to the earlier full report **[Studying Craft: trends in education and training](#)**. Table 4.1 sets out the stages of education and training covered in the report by age range and typical qualifications.

The study covers all stages of formal education funded by government from the age of 16. Recognising the importance of informal training, we have also included community learning i.e., government-funded 'adult education'. As in the original report, private training provision is not included as national data is difficult to obtain.

For each stage, the study considers trends in the provision of and participation in craft courses. The analysis draws on six years of data (2007/08–2012/13). This study takes forward the methodology we used in our earlier report and applies the same definitions to identify courses and participation, using key word searches.

Table 4.1:
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

Two types of definition are used in the study: the material discipline that the course addresses and the perceived closeness of the course's relationship with craft. Courses that are not specific to a particular discipline are categorised in the broad 'general craft' category.

Table 4.2:
Material disciplines

Disciplines	
General craft	Model making
Ceramics	Paper crafts
Glass	Textiles
Furniture	Toys and instruments
Jewellery	Wax crafts
Silversmithing	Wood crafts
Metal crafts	Animation

Animation is included where courses might feasibly include model making, which brings together making and creative design. Digital animation courses and others where research identified that model making was not part of the curriculum are excluded.

4. Approach to this study

Table 4.3 categorises the extent to which a course has a direct relationship to craft, or provides complementary skills. Courses are described as 'borderline' either in terms of the alternative routes they offer into craft or their alternative production methods.

Table 4.3:
Course categorisation

Core	Complementary
Design-and-make courses through which makers might develop core knowledge/practice, and/or courses which might offer routes into the craft sector.	'Next step' skills-based or materials-specific courses through which makers might add to their core knowledge/practice, particularly those looking to diversify their practice (e.g. by using their craft skills in the fashion, animation, theatre industries, etc.). Some of these courses might involve makers taking their craft skills/knowledge into roles that aren't always seen as craft and which don't necessarily combine design with creative making.
Borderline core	Borderline complementary
Allied activities that may provide alternative routes into a craft career. Some of these courses might involve alternative production methods or design processes.	Courses that develop skills in processes that could play a supporting role in a maker's practice, if developed in tandem with core craft skills.

5. Provision of craft education

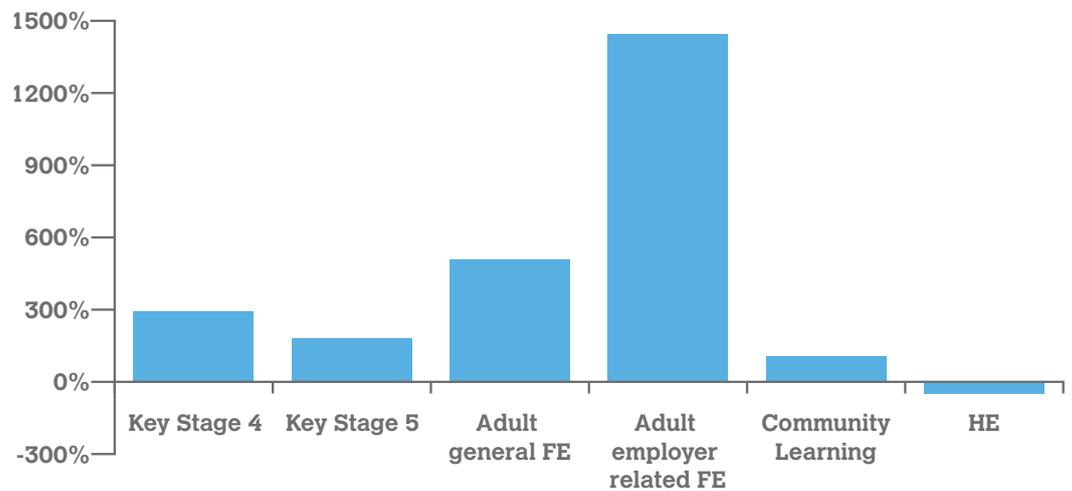
This section looks at course provision and participation at each education stage. The figures and tables here present trends and are followed by an analysis of those trends at each education stage. Provision is summarised in Figure 5.1.

Many new courses at Key Stages 4 and 5 and in further education are delivered in units which are short in length. The proliferation of shorter, unitised courses gives the impression that many more are available than is necessarily the case.

In general, across all education stages, we are seeing a rise in 'complementary' courses, which are not replacing 'core' courses but which are overtaking them in number. Of particular note is the increase in textiles provision which is taking place at all stages except in higher education.

Figures 5.1 and 5.2, and Table 5.1 summarise participation.

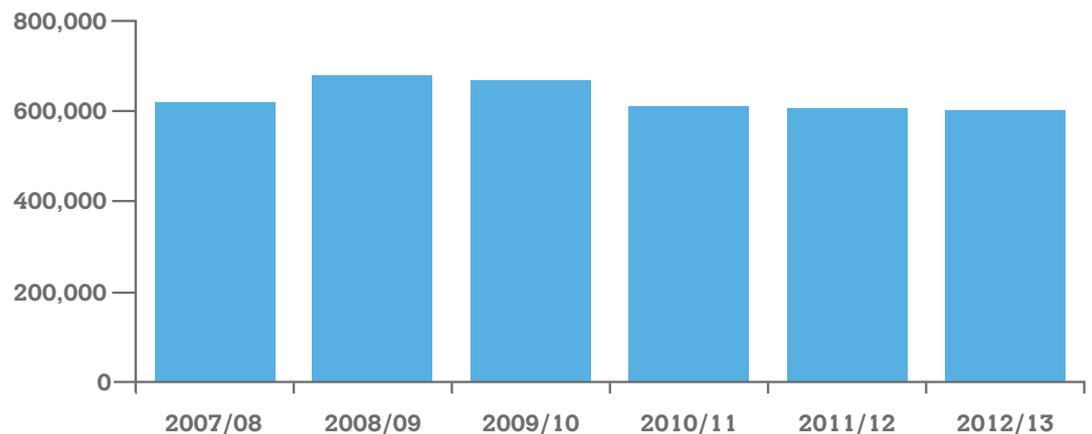
Figure 5.1:
Percentage change in
courses by educational
stage 2007/08–2012/13



Source: Learning Aims Reference Application / Learning Aims Database, UCAS. (TBR ref Data workbook 2/S1-S7)

Figure 5.2 shows that a downward trend is apparent in the total numbers of craft learners since 2008/09.

Figure 5.2:
Total craft learner
numbers 2007/08
to 2012/13



Source: National Pupil Database, Individualised Learner Record 2007/08 – 2012/13, HESA (TBR ref Data workbook 2/S8-S16)

5. Provision of craft education

Table 5.1 shows the total number of craft learners, broken down by stage and year.

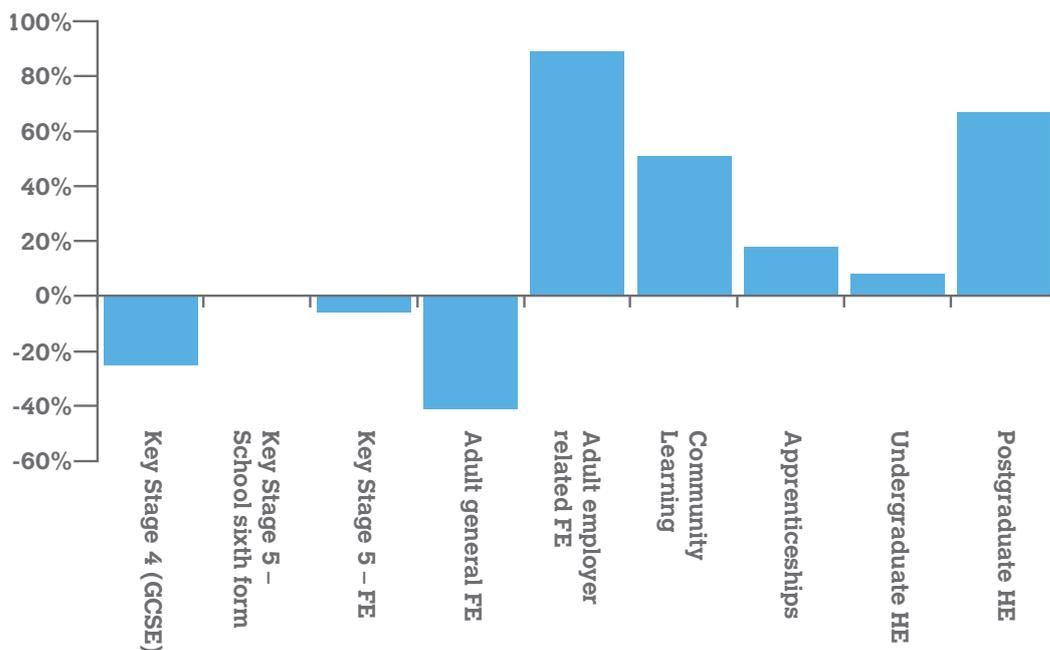
Table 5.1:
Craft learner
numbers 2007/08
to 2012/13

Stage	2007/08	2008/09	2009/10	2010/11	2011/12	2012/13
Key Stage 4 (GCSE)	360,910	338,780	316,650	290,540	277,810	272,140
Key Stage 5 – School Sixth Forms	52,880	57,040	57,860	51,060	55,540	52,800
Key Stage 5 – FE	14,320	10,810	9,900	6,090	9,040	13,400
Adult FE	20,550	15,110	11,830	4,770	8,540	12,220
Adult employer-related FE	470	840	370	230	650	890
Apprenticeships	390	510	280	140	390	460
HE – undergraduate	17,940	18,570	19,470	19,720	20,340	19,330
HE – postgraduate	1,180	1,240	1,440	1,490	1,580	1,970
Community Learning	150,890	235,080	248,800	236,060	231,570	227,690
Total	619,530	677,980	666,600	610,100	605,460	600,900

Source: National Pupil Database, Individualised Learner Record 2007/08 – 2012/13, HESA (TBR ref Data workbook 2/S8-S16)

Figure 5.3 shows the change in learner numbers as percentages.

Figure 5.3:
Percentage change
in learners by stage
2007/08–2012/13



Source: National Pupil Database, Individualised Learner Record 2007/08 – 2012/13, HESA (TBR ref Data workbook 2/S8-S16)

5.1 Key Stage 4

The overall number of courses has increased by 293% between 2007/08 and 2012/13. In part, this increase reflects the increasing unitisation of courses, in which larger courses are broken down into smaller units, many of which are short in length.

At Key Stage 4 the separation of design & technology GCSE into graphic design, product design, resistant materials technology and textiles drives specialisation from an early age.

Participation in GCSEs at Key Stage 4 has continued to fall. Learner numbers are 25% lower than in 2007/08, compared with a 3% fall in total number of GCSE students.

This is a critical point for craft education: this trend is likely to reflect a reduction in opportunity for young people to engage in craft earlier in their education and it has potentially serious implications for the future pipeline of makers. Through our Manifesto, Our Future is in the Making: An Education Manifesto for Craft and Making, we are seeking to reverse this decline.

5. Provision of craft education

5.2 Key Stage 5

The overall number of courses has increased by 220% between 2007/08 and 2012/13. Although the number of craft courses has increased (680 in 2012/13, up from 230 in 2007/08), this rate of increase is slower than in other Key Stage 5 subjects (415%). Craft therefore continues to become less visible. Core craft subjects in particular have declined. (See the accompanying Data workbook 2 for the full data set.)

There is a clear difference in take-up between courses in school sixth forms and those offered at Key Stage 5 in further education colleges. Sixth form learner numbers in 2012/13 are similar to numbers in 2007/08, though they fluctuate annually over this period. Overall, further education numbers have fallen by 6% since 2007/08, though the fall was concentrated in the period to 2010/11 and numbers have been rising since, more than doubling from a low of just over 6,000.

These differences may reflect the different 'market propositions' of schools and FE colleges.

5.3 General further education

The main area of increase in further education courses for adults aged 19 and over is at Levels 2 and 3, with some increase at entry Level and Level 1. The greatest increase in course category is in complementary courses. Many of the new course units introduced are short in length.

Participation in general further education has declined overall by 41% over the period of the study. However, as with 16-18 further education, the decline is concentrated in the period to 2010/11 and numbers have been rising since then.

5.4 Employer-related further education

The increase in provision of 1441% over five years is significant, with a large relative increase in availability of craft provision in the last two years. However, craft provision has not grown at the same rate as all other provision over the whole study period, and has therefore become less visible. In addition the number of courses is quite small relative to the number of courses in other stages, growing from 61 courses to 940 over the period of the study.

There are large increases in metal crafts and textiles courses, but also growth in other disciplines, with a broadening of the offer available across Levels. There are new courses available at Level 4 in jewellery and silversmithing.

Participation in employer-related further education fluctuated but ultimately increased by the end of the period by an overall 89%, the largest relative increase of any education stage. However, numbers are dramatically different: there were 890 adults in employer-related further education in 2012/13, compared to 12,000 in general further education.

5.5 Apprenticeships

Formal Apprenticeship frameworks are historically available in only a small number of disciplines. Some frameworks available in 2007/08 have disappeared, most notably ceramics.

New frameworks have been introduced in furniture, jewellery and silversmithing, and in craft-related theatre design between 2007/08 and 2012/13. Formal Apprenticeship frameworks remain available only in these disciplines, plus textiles. The Crafts Council is a partner in a new Craft Apprenticeship Trailblazer, launched in March 2014, under the Government's Apprenticeship reforms.

There was a slightly higher number of learners in 2012/13 (460) than in 2007/08 (390) but there has been considerable fluctuation during this period and it is difficult to discern trends.

The balance appears to be shifting towards Advanced Apprenticeships (rather than Intermediate Apprenticeships), driven by an increase in participation in Advanced Apprenticeships in furniture disciplines.

5. Provision of craft education

5.6 Higher Education

Higher education is the only area in which there has been a reduction in the number of courses available: 46% in five years. Almost half the courses available in 2007/08 have disappeared. There was a sharp decline between 2009/10–2010/11, in particular, when courses (mainly first degrees) reduced in number from 826 to 523.

Regional data, set out in the workbook accompanying this updated report, reveal a sharper rate of decline in higher education courses in the north east, north west and west midlands than in the rest of England. There has been a reduction of more than 50% in five years in the number of courses available across England as a whole in glass, furniture, ceramics and product design.

In direct contrast to course closures, overall participation in higher education increased by 11% over the study period, although learner numbers fell slightly in the most recent year by around 3% between 2011/12 and 2012/13.

There was a slight fall in undergraduate student numbers between 2011/12 and 2012/13 – student numbers on first degrees remain 9% higher than in 2007/08, but numbers on other undergraduate programmes have fallen below 2007/08 Levels (by 3%).

At first degree Level there is a growth in participation across all categories, particularly in 'borderline complementary' which amounts to half of the increase. In 'other' undergraduate courses the fall in participation was in 'core' courses.

There is a large percentage change in postgraduate numbers (67%) over the period of the study, but a small absolute number of students. The very small number of doctoral students (120 in 2012/13) may reflect the nature of craft (to date) as a taught rather than research subject. Where there are doctoral students, our earlier findings suggested these were linked to individual, institutional, or geographic strengths.

Absolute numbers show the dominance of undergraduate students. There were 19,300 undergraduate students in 2012/13 compared to 2,000 postgraduates.

5.7 Community learning

The number of community learning courses is increasing, at a similar rate (108% over six years) to other courses.

Participation in community learning craft courses increased by 51% (with a slight fall in learner numbers between 2011/12 and 2012/13), compared with a 14% decline in overall participation. Almost all participation was in 'core' craft (and almost all general craft). Our earlier findings showed that Community Learning is dominated by older learners and by women.

6. Comparing change – courses and learners

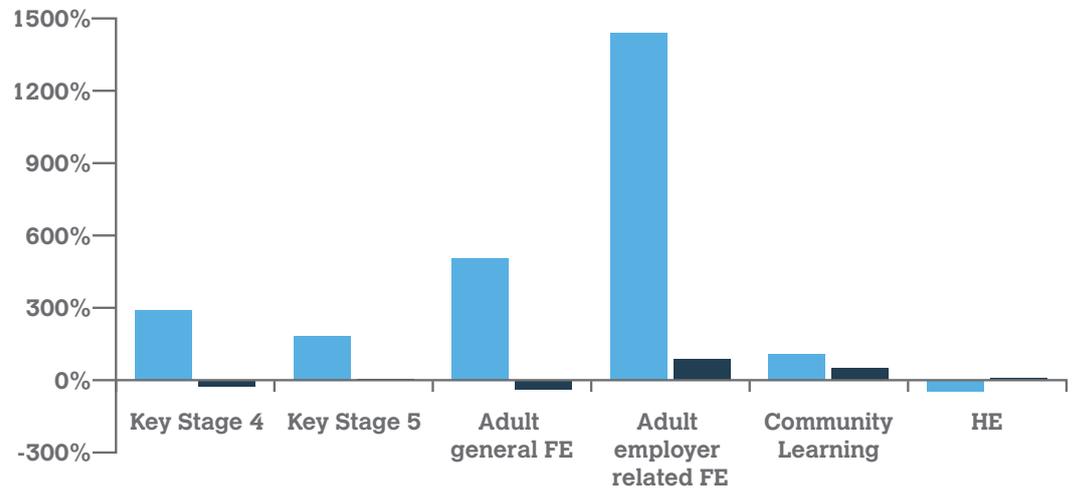
Figure 6.1 sets provision and participation data alongside each other. Although the two sets of data are not directly comparable, it gives a useful overview of trends.

Figure 6.1:

Provision and participation
in craft courses 2007/08
to 2012/13

courses
learners

Source: Learning Aims
Reference Application/
Learning Aims Database,
National Pupil Database,
Individualised Learner
Record 2007/08 – 2012/13,
UCAS, HESA (TBR ref Data
workbook 2/S1-S16)



7. Concluding remarks

The Crafts Council is seeking to address some of the challenges and trends that are highlighted in this report through

**Our Future is in the Making:
An Education Manifesto for Craft and Making.**

We intend to publish an update of this report every two years.

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