



Brexit and the Future of Creative Education in the UK

A report by the All-Party Parliamentary Design and Innovation Group and Council for Higher Education in Art and Design

Overview

In November 2018, the All-Party Parliamentary Design and Innovation Group (APDIG) and Council for Higher Education in Art and Design (CHEAD) organised a roundtable workshop at Staffordshire University, Stoke-on-Trent. The event brought together a number of key stakeholders from across the design education to discuss the impact of Brexit upon the sector, the risks associated with a “No Deal” scenario, and steps that institutions could take following Britain’s withdrawal from the European Union.

The attendees at the workshop included:

Professor David Hawkins: Dean, School of Creative Arts and Engineering, Staffordshire University

Professor Jonathan Harris: Head of School of Art & Professor in Global Art & Design Studies, Faculty of Arts, Design and Media, Birmingham City University

Dr John Pymm: Dean of the Faculty of Arts, Wolverhampton School of Art
Professor Alison Yarrington, Dean of the School of the Arts, English and Drama, Loughborough University

Peter Rudge: Associate Professor – Film Production Technology. Staffordshire University

Paul Williams: Chairman, Stoke-on-Trent Cultural Destinations Partnership

Professor Colin Rhodes: Dean and PVC Development, Kingston School of Art

Louise O’Boyle: Associate Head of School, Belfast School of Art

Beverley Lamey: Recruitment and Resources Manager. School of Art, Design and Fashion, University of Central Lancashire

Jack Tindale: Manager, Design and Innovation, Policy Connect

Sian White: Design Council

Sandra Booth: Director of Policy and External Relations, CHEAD

Anna Maloney: Director of Membership and Operations, CHEAD

This paper summarises the main issues raised during the roundtable, as well as setting out future policy angles for the creative education sector to take into account in light of Brexit. It also summarises recent developments in the political process.

Creative Higher Education and Brexit

Design is a British success story. Research by the Design Council found that in 2016 the sector was worth £85.2 billion in gross value added (GVA) to the UK. Importantly, it outpaced the general economic growth rate: as a whole the sector has enjoyed an annual growth rate of 6 percent since



2014 against an economy-wide average of 4 percent. Designers are also 29 percent more productive than the average UK worker.¹ This growth has been driven by newly formed SMEs and microbusinesses. In 2016, one in three design roles were digital.²

Over the coming decades, the UK will face a number of challenges. The increased use of robotics will transform the working environment for millions of people and potentially result in significant job losses globally. Entire sectors of the economy are likely to see their human workforce automated, with a need to re-skill and retrain those occupying obsolete positions.

To compete outside the EU the UK will need to capitalise on its strengths in an automated global economy. Design and the creative industries offer the most obvious path to consolidating these important gains.

A 2015 report by Nesta noted that “crucially, for both the UK and the US, none of the jobs at all in the highly creative category (including design) are at high risk of automation.”³ This has been followed by increased support for government for the creative industries via incentives such as the Creative Industries Sector Deal. Published in March 2018, the deal sets out a clear vision statement:

“The creative industries are at the heart of the UK’s competitive advantage, and - in the face of technological transformation at home and new possibilities globally - represent a major strategic opportunity.”⁴

However, the benefits of the creative industries and the design sector goes beyond economic growth. A creative society is a happy society, able to engage with the endless potential for human imagination. The creative industries, be they the visual arts, classical and contemporary music, urban design, architecture, video games or any other sector, have the ability to make people more optimistic about the lives, to find an output for their artistic talents, and to build new friendships. They must be seen as a vital part of the public good and something to be promoted and embraced for these inherent positive values alone.

At the heart of the creative and design economy is a world-leading education system. Britain holds a global reputation for excellence in higher and further education. As well as a strong domestic market, the UK continues to be one of the most popular destinations for international students. The strength is shown in a number contexts. For the 2017/18 academic year⁵:

- The total number students in higher education stood at 2,343,095 – an increase of 1 percent from 2016/17
- UK students made up the largest proportion of enrolments in 2017/18
- Full-time postgraduates had the highest percentage from non-EU countries, at 43 percent
- Since the Brexit referendum in June 2016, there has been a slight drop in the number of first year students from other European Union countries
- Despite this, the number of first year students for 2017/18 are still higher than they were in 2013/14

¹ Design Council, [The Design Economy](#), (July, 2018), pgs, 11-12

² *Ibid*, pg, 13

³ NESTA, [Creativity vs Robots](#), (2015), pg. 15

⁴ HM Government, [Creative Industries Sector Deal](#), (28th March, 2018) pg. 9

⁵ HESA: [Higher Education Student Statistics: UK, 2017/18](#), [Retrieved 26th January, 2019]



- Non-EU first year student numbers grew by 13,140 between 2016/17 and 2017/18. Most of this increase occurred at postgraduate taught level
- China sent more students to the UK than any other overseas country. In 2017/18, one-third of all non-EU students were from China, whilst the number of students from China was also 21 percent higher in 2017/18 than in 2013/14

However, concerns exist.

Despite an increase in the number of international students enrolling on creative and design programmes in 2017/18⁶, this has widely been seen as being motivated by a desire to enter the British education system on existing UK/EU mutual guarantees. Outside of the EU, a number of other countries have seen the number of students studying in the UK decline markedly. Nigeria has seen a decline of 42 percent in student numbers coming to the UK over the five year period from 2013/14 and 2017/18, whilst numbers from India declined from 39,090 in 2010/11 to 19,750 in 2017/18 – although this was a small rise from the previous year⁷.

A recent report by the Higher Education Commission analysed these changing trends in higher education. Surveys of international students indicate high levels of overall satisfaction with their studies in the UK. The 2017 International Student Barometer notes that the UK ranks first by overall student satisfaction, as well as first by undergraduates across five measures the student experience⁸. However – this positive view masks more concerning trends and pressure from other further education providers, especially in the Anglosphere. The Commission found that since the 2012/13 academic year, there has been a decline of 26 percent in the number of Indian students enrolled at UK HEIs. Over the same period, enrolment by Indian students in the United States of America increased by 62 percent, in Canada by 40 percent, and Australia by 50 percent⁹.

Brexit does not – alone – explain this decline. Changes in domestic government policy since 2010, including changes to visa rules and university funding, as well as aforementioned competition from foreign competitors have led to a decline. However, it is clear that Brexit has eroded the appeal and competitive advantage British HEIs have held in the past. The likely impacts of Brexit upon these institutions are outlined below.

The United Kingdom's withdrawal from the European Union

At the time of writing, the United Kingdom is scheduled to leave the European Union at 11pm on Friday 29th March 2019¹⁰. This time and date was set into law under the European Union (Withdrawal) Act of 2018 and is the default legal outcome set by Parliament in lieu of any subsequent amendments or legislation. Recent discussions into a second referendum must be voted upon by Parliament, whilst any extension to the withdrawal period under the terms of Article 50 of the Treaty of Lisbon must be legislated for and voted upon by Parliament, as well as carried with the support of all other members of the European Council. However, a delay to the final Brexit date by up-to two months is possible and has been actively discussed between HM Government and the

⁶ Dezeen: [Number of EU applicants for UK creative courses rises as Brexit approaches](#), 13th February, 2018

⁷ HESA: [Higher Education Student Statistics: UK, 2017/18](#), [Retrieved 26th January, 2019]

⁸ Universities UK: [UK universities lead the global pack for international student satisfaction](#) (21st June, 2017)

⁹ Higher Education Commission: [Staying Ahead: Are International Students Going Down Under?](#) (September 2018) pg. 40

¹⁰ HM Government, [European Union \(Withdrawal\) Act 2018](#), [Retrieved 26th January, 2019] pg. 21

European Council. This would likely take the form of a parliamentary vote to approve a delay on the withdrawal period¹¹.

The United Kingdom may also agree to unilaterally revoke Article 50 following a ruling by the European Court of Justice¹².

However – this section is written under two assumptions:

1. The United Kingdom will leave the European Union on or shortly after the times established by statute law in the European Union (Withdrawal) Act of 2018
2. The withdrawal agreement and political declaration approved between the Government and European Council in November 2018¹³ and subsequent enabling legislation will enter into force after approval by Parliament

The possibility of the United Kingdom leaving without a deal will be discussed briefly. British withdrawal from the European Union on Friday 29th March 2019 – regardless of all other outcomes – remains the legal and political default. In this event, all existing bilateral and multilateral links would come to an end and any subsequent discussions would be handled on a third nation basis.

Even in the event of the Brexit deal being approved by Parliament, it is important to reiterate that the so-called “Implementation” or “Transition” period would be for a set period of time, currently set to end on 31st December 2020¹⁴. This instance has been negotiated to facilitate a period of adjustment for British businesses and organisations, to allow for continued participation in the EU Single Market and Customs Union, and to permit negotiations into a future economic and social partnership between the United Kingdom and European Union. This final settlement would – naturally – not be clear until at least 2020.

Likely impacts of Brexit on the creative education sector

Should the UK and EU reach a Brexit deal, a number of challenges would nevertheless impact the creative industries and the higher education sector. It is important that all universities and other bodies are aware of these issues, which are set out in a recent guide prepared by Arts Council England¹⁵ around the following key areas:

- Organisation in receipt of EU Funding
- Freedom of movement, immigration and citizens’ rights
- UK artists or organisations travelling to the EU post Brexit
- Movement of goods/Customs and borders
- Export and import of cultural property
- Data protection

¹¹ BBC News, [May to offer MPs no-deal Brexit vote](#), (26th January, 2019)

¹² Court of Justice of the European Union, [Case C-621/18 – Judgement of the Course](#), (10th December, 2018)

¹³ HM Government, [Agreement on the withdrawal of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland from the European Union and the European Atomic Energy Community, as endorsed by leaders at a special meeting of the European Council on 25 November 2018](#), (25th November, 2018)

¹⁴ BBC News, [The UK and EU agree terms for Brexit transition period](#), (19th March, 2018) [Retrieved 26th January, 2019]

¹⁵ Arts Council England, [EU Exit Guide](#), (11th February, 2019) [Retrieved 26th January, 2019]



- Geo-blocking of online content
- Copyright and Intellectual Property Rights
- Broadcasting and on demand services
- Money and Taxes/Tax relief

Design and the creative industries are particularly affected in these areas, not least due to the complex supply chains associated with the service sector and the relationship between universities and industry.

With many international students attracted to British creative HEIs owing to this close relationship, any disruption to working rights and post-study work could prove detrimental to the wider industry. Restrictions to travel, visas and tuition fees could mean that the UK's currently highly competitive and well-respected design sector loses its edge in the international design market¹⁶. Whilst the concept of public good and concept of education for education's sake should not be ignored by educationalists and policy makers, it is a reality that job security and career prospects form a major part of students wishing to enter creative education. Any disruption to this process could have serious repercussions to the long-term health of the creative HEI sector.

The specific economic and political impacts of a 'No Deal' are less clear, but are likely to be severe. A report by Universities UK¹⁷ noted the following outcomes as particular causes for concern across the higher education sector:

- There would be great uncertainty on the scale and scope of the government's enacting of specific commitments agreed as part of the Draft Withdrawal Agreement on continued participation in Horizon 2020 and Erasmus+
- There would be no agreement on implementing a transition period between the date of Brexit and 31 December 2020, during which time it was envisioned that freedom of movement would essentially still apply
- There would be no certainty on what the UK's future relationship with the EU would look like, including in areas like the mobility of citizens and access to EU programmes

Any impact from a 'no deal' Brexit could result in the following outcomes taking effect on 29th March 2019:

- EU nationals entering the UK for more than three months would need to apply for European Temporary Leave to Remain and, if intending to stay for more than three years for study or work reasons, might need to apply for a visa to cover any period of stay beyond three years
- The UK's ability to participate in Horizon 2020 and Erasmus+ could cease
- The continued mutual recognition of professional qualifications covered by the current EU Directive would be uncertain

A briefing by the Creative Industries Federation¹⁸ further noted the challenges a No Deal Brexit would have upon the creative economy, with particular reference to impact on non-academic issues

¹⁶ Design Week, [Draft Brexit deal: how it could affect designers and creative businesses](#), (15th November, 2018) [Retrieved 26th January, 2019]

¹⁷ Universities UK, [A "No Deal" Brexit: Implications for Universities and Minimising Risk](#), (February 2019), pg. 2

¹⁸ Creative Industries Federation, [Technical Notices on a 'No Deal Brexit'](#) [Retrieved 26th January, 2019]



that are nevertheless of relevance to many recent graduates, such as IP and patent rights, mutual recognition of regulatory matters, and trade in goods.

The value of creative higher education

Despite these immediate challenges, the roundtable discussed the wider impact of creative higher education to the wider body politic. There was a consensus amongst participants that – regardless of the nature of Brexit – creative HEIs and the design sector have a key role to play in the future of the economy. Britain’s withdrawal from the European Union does little to impact the longer term trends and challenges to the regional, national and global economy. On the eve of the so-called “4th Industrial Revolution” – it is vital that the sector is able to meet the challenges posed by the development of new and emerging technologies, such as increased automation, the rise of AI, and the Internet of Things.

A 2016 report by the World Economic Forum has been one of many to have noted the importance of creativity to the future economy. The study notes 35 percent of the skills needed to navigate the world of work will have changed by 2020, regardless of industry. In 2015 creativity was ranked as number ten on the list of critical skills¹⁹. In 2020, it will be the third most sought after skill, behind complex problem solving and critical thinking. These areas are themselves a key part of any creative or design university degrees programme. The report highlights the skills most relevant to the changing international economy²⁰:

1. Complex Problem Solving
2. Critical Thinking
3. Creativity
4. People Management
5. Coordinating with Others
6. Emotional Intelligence
7. Judgement and Decision Making
8. Service Orientation
9. Negotiation
10. Cognitive Flexibility

In this context, it is vital that creative HEIs and other bodies are able to articulate the value of the skills that creative education provides. The continued focus on the STEM agenda and the exclusion of art and design as compulsory elements of the English Baccalaureate has proven problematic. As noted in the APDIG’s October 2018 report on creative skills, Design and Technology is integral to the Science, Technology, Engineering and Maths agenda²¹. It plays a fundamental role in developing skills required for other subjects such as engineering and medicine, whilst also helping to develop transferable skills like creative thinking and manual dexterity.

A 2016 reports by the Edge Foundation²² noted the benefits of D&T to students who go on to take advanced engineering and science degrees. Manual dexterity is one area that is increasingly valued

¹⁹ World Economic Forum, [The Future of Jobs: Employment, Skills and Workforce Strategy for the Fourth Industrial Revolution](#), (January 2016), pg. 21

²⁰ World Economic Forum, [The 10 skills you need to thrive in the Fourth Industrial Revolution](#), (19th January, 2016) [Retrieved 26th January, 2019]

²¹ APDIG, [Design Skills and the UK’s Industrial Strategy](#), (October 2016), pg. 3

²² Edge Foundation, [14-19 Education: A New Baccalaureate](#), (2016) pg. 4



by medical schools and engineering developments, for example in robotic surgery. It is vital that HEIs develop positive relations with secondary schools to promote the value of creative degrees and subject at the tertiary level.

The core themes that emerged from the roundtable were:

- **Civic Mission of Universities:** Higher education bodies are increasingly at the centre of urban and regional economies, contributing to the economic, social and cultural life across the country. With creative HEIs should make their mission statement to their neighbours even clearer – such as the Barber Institute bringing together the music and art history departments of the University of Birmingham together with public galleries and concert halls, or the Centre of Contemporary Art at Goldsmith’s.
- **Creative Skills:** The so-called “pipeline” approach to creative skills and outputs is an increasingly outdated means of looking at what is a far more complex system of education than the binary dichotomy suggests.²³ Universities should focus more on showing their impact on wider society via the promotion of new skills in areas outside the creative industries.
- **Local Industrial Strategies:** Many creative HEIs have a vital role to play in promoting economic growth and regeneration, especially outside London and the South East – institutions should seek to build relationships with local businesses and government bodies to promote regional strengths and specialisms, such as the work of Staffordshire University with the Stoke-on-Trent ceramics sector²⁴.
- **Consolidating new and established international relationships:** Brexit has placed many university networks in a state of flux, as well as the impact that withdrawal from schemes such as Erasmus+ and the post-Horizon 2020 landscape will have upon international student placements and research partnerships. It is vital that creative HEIs are able to maintain existing relationships with European partners, as well as to collaborate with new and emerging creative economies, such as China, South Korea, India and Latin America.

The role of creative and design education to the UK’s soft power projection is set out below.

Soft Power

Although the term “soft power” has existed in one form or another for decades, it was originally coined by the American political scientist Joseph Nye in his 1990 book, *Bound to Lead: The Changing Nature of American Power*. In 2017, he defined it further as the “ability to obtain preferred outcomes by attraction, rather than coercion or payment.”²⁵

Broadly speaking – the countries that will win in the 21st Century will be those with the best story, not the finest army. Despite recent reputational hits – the 2018 Soft Power Ranking by Portland Communications placed Britain as the leading soft power country in the world²⁶.

²³ APDIG, [Design Skills and the UK’s Industrial Strategy](#), (October 2016), pg. 5

²⁴ Staffordshire University, [University secures £200k boost for Ceramics sector](#), (30th January, 2018) [Retrieved 26th January, 2019]

²⁵ Nye, Joseph: [Soft Power: The Origins and Political Progress of a Concept](#), Palgrave Communications, Vol. 3 (February 2017)

²⁶ Portland Communications: [Soft Power 30](#), (July 2018) [Retrieved 26th January, 2019]



The House of Lords Committee on Soft Power noted the importance of the British HEI sector as a major contributor to the UK's international reputation. Higher education solidifies and builds upon existing bilateral ties, which are only increased when foreign students return home. In 2015, HEPI noted that 55 world leaders, including Presidents, Prime Ministers, and Monarchs from 51 countries, attended higher education institutions in the UK²⁷. UK international alumni have achieved prestigious positions such as leaders of industry and business, artists, writers, researchers, Nobel Laureates. Providing an exhaustive list of international alumni in the creative industries would be impossible, but they include:

- Alex Levac (London College of Communication)
- Riccardo Tisci (Central Saint Martins)
- Junko Mori (Camberwell College of Arts)
- Isi Metzstein (Glasgow School of Arts)
- Lee Jinjoon (Ruskin School of Fine Art)

The Higher Education Commission received written evidence which emphasised the importance of international students in developing the UK's soft power capabilities:

“The effect of having international students spend part of their lives in the UK, in which they not only obtain an education, but learn about being part of the UK culture, highlights how the UK's higher education sector is a long-term asset, not just nationally, but internationally.”²⁸

A 2015 review by the Cabinet Office into the impact of the Commonwealth, Chevening, and Marshall Scholarship schemes emphasised the importance of such programmes to the wider national interest:

“Scholarship schemes build soft power, in the short and long term; they promote international development; they enhance the reputation of UK universities; they recognise and promote the highest standards of intellectual achievement; they build international academic communities; they recognise and promote the highest standards of intellectual achievement; and they project British excellence abroad, promoting the UK internationally as a place to visit, study and do business.”²⁹

This review also resulted in the establishment of a cross-government group to explore how to further improve the impact and relationship between these high-level scholarship schemes. The Committee on Soft Power commented that greater investment in scholarships by other countries is threatening the UK's competitive position and that a small amount of extra funding would “bring the country into line to ensure that the brightest and best of the world's future leaders feel an affinity with the UK.”³⁰

Whilst these programmes have historically to focused on government and international relations for diplomats, it is clear the huge alumni family of CHEAD bodies and other art schools has a key role to

²⁷ UK Parliament: [The Committee on Soft Power and the UK's Influence](#) (28th March, 2014) [Retrieved 26th January, 2019] pg. 99

²⁸ Higher Education Commission: [Staying Ahead: Are International Students Going Down Under?](#) (September 2018) pg. 42

²⁹ HM Government: [Scholarships Cluster Review](#), (March 2015) pg. 2

³⁰ UK Parliament: [The Committee on Soft Power and the UK's Influence](#) (28th March, 2014) [Retrieved 26th January, 2019] pg. 102



All-Party Parliamentary
design&innovation
Group

play in promoting improved relations with foreign institutions and developing the UK's international presence at higher levels.

About the Sponsors

Council for Higher Education in Art and Design

CHEAD is the representative body for the art, design, creative media, and related disciplines in higher education. CHEAD provides a voice for and on behalf of higher education art and design in the UK four nations advancing knowledge and understanding in the sector and promoting the sector's interests to others. We carry out research, scan the policy horizon, brief our members, facilitate networking opportunities for senior staff from within and outside HE as well as helping to shape higher education art and design policy on our members' behalf. We facilitate specialist internal networks supporting art and design research leaders, Subject Associations, and HE gallery leaders.

Visit: thead.ac.uk

APDIG

The All-Party Parliamentary Design and Innovation Group is a cross-party coalition of Parliamentarians and design sector organisations that work to develop new design policy ideas, critique existing government decision-making around design, communicate within Parliament the enormous potential value of design, and help the design community better engage with the policy process. It is part of Policy Connect.

Visit: policyconnect.org.uk/apdig

Policy Connect

Policy Connect is a cross-party think tank. We improve people's lives by influencing public policy. We collaborate with Government and Parliament - including through our APPGs - and across the public, private and third sectors to develop our policy ideas from research, facts, data and consensus.

Visit: policyconnect.org.uk