

LOOKING OUT:

EFFECTIVE ENGAGEMENT WITH CREATIVE
AND CULTURAL ENTERPRISE

2.0 ART, DESIGN AND MEDIA EDUCATION

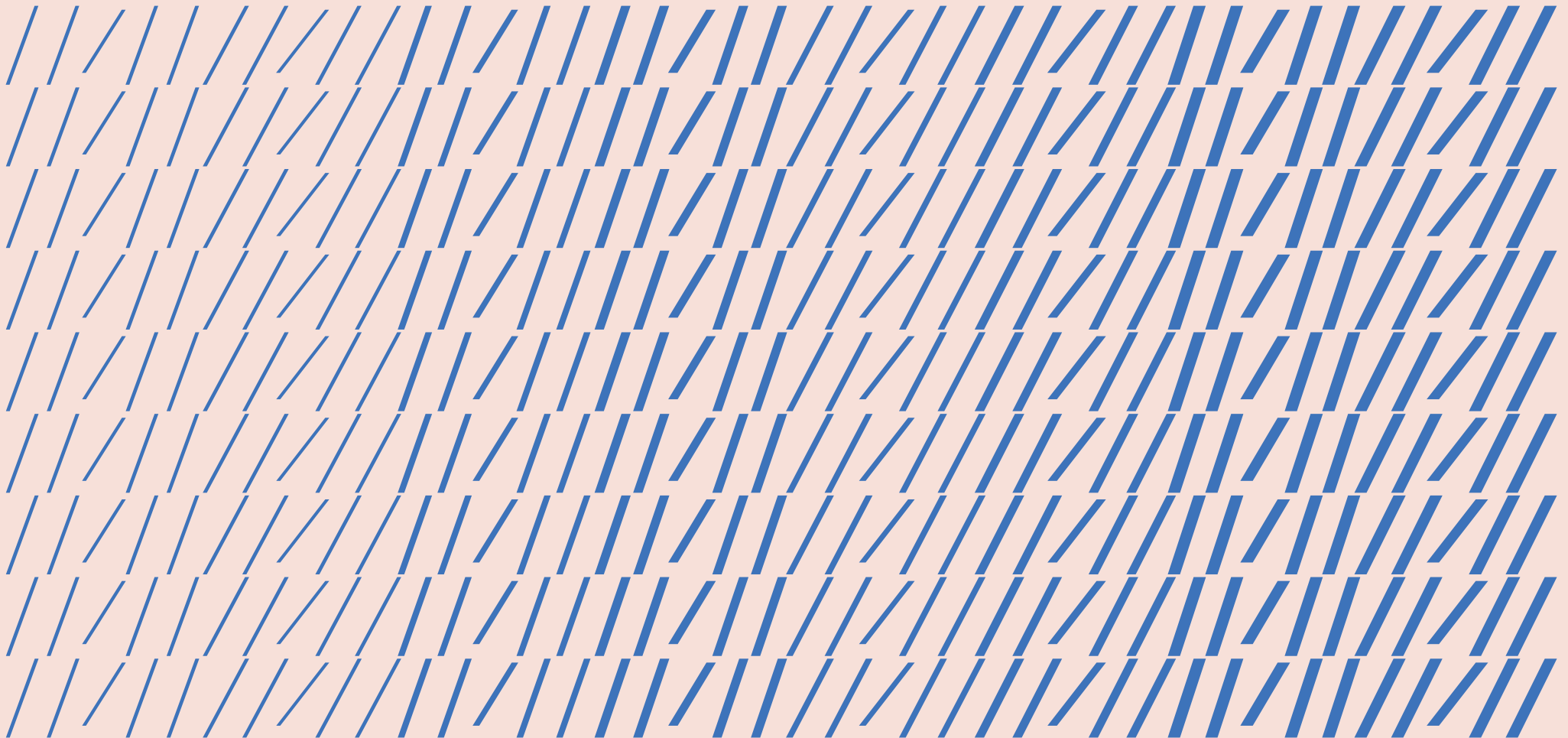
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University of Brighton



2.0 ART, DESIGN AND MEDIA EDUCATION

1 There are 222,810 (9.7%) HE students studying subjects that relate directly to creative industries. That is, all of 'Creative arts and design', most of 'Media and mass communications' and 'Architecture'. There were just over 2.3 million HE students in the UK in 2007/8.

There are 19 HESA categories of which 'Business and administrative studies' is the largest by number of students at 310,455 (13.5%). The smallest, is 'Veterinary science' with 4,850 students (0.2%). See: www.hesa.ac.uk/index.php/component/option,com_datatables/Itemid,121/ (accessed 10.10.10).

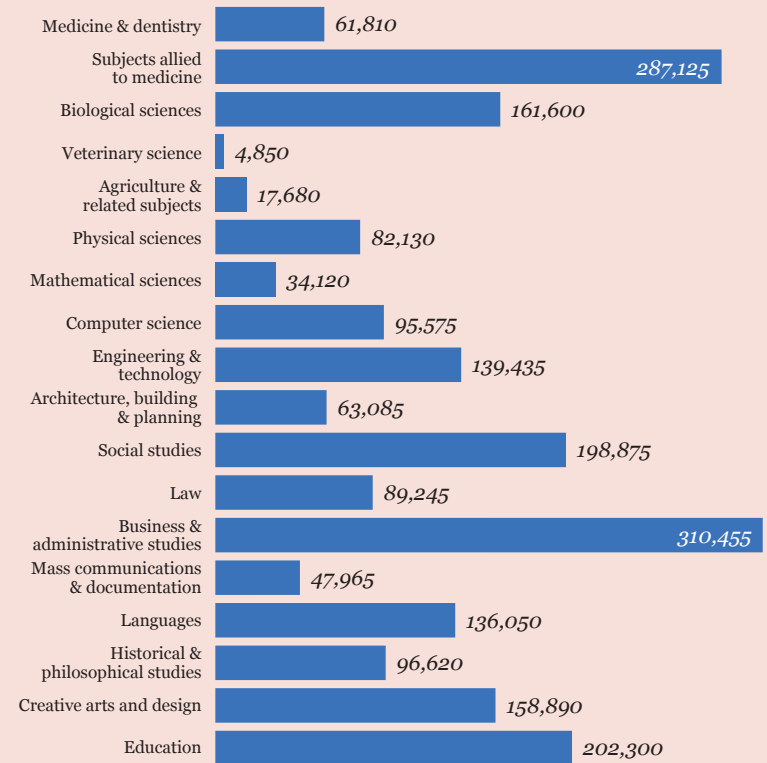
2 These diagrams are based on HESA for HEIs and on the ADM-HEA Higher Education in Further Education Network.

3 A simple search for 'fine art' courses on the University and Colleges Admissions Service (UCAS) website produces 473 undergraduate courses delivered at 121 institutions across the UK. A search for design courses delivers 186 types of design courses. Selecting 'product design' at random produced 196 product design courses delivered at 61 institutions. Many of these courses are combined degree courses, dozens are delivered in HEIs with no art, design or media department or faculty and it is likely that many have very little content that would be recognisable as Arts HE; a testament, perhaps to the power of 'art' and 'design' as a brand for HE courses.

There are 169 HEIs and 436, sixth form and further education colleges (FECs) in the UK. Of these, 150 HEIs and 230 FECs deliver one or more art, design or media course at HE (Level 4 and above). According to the Higher Education Statistics Agency (HESA), the agency charged with gathering data on HE in the UK, there are just over 156,000 students in art, design and media subjects (Arts HE)¹. This is 6.6% of the total HE student population in the UK. It is estimated that between 10–15 % of Arts HE provision is delivered in FECs, that is, around 20 to 30,000 students² based on the HESA data.

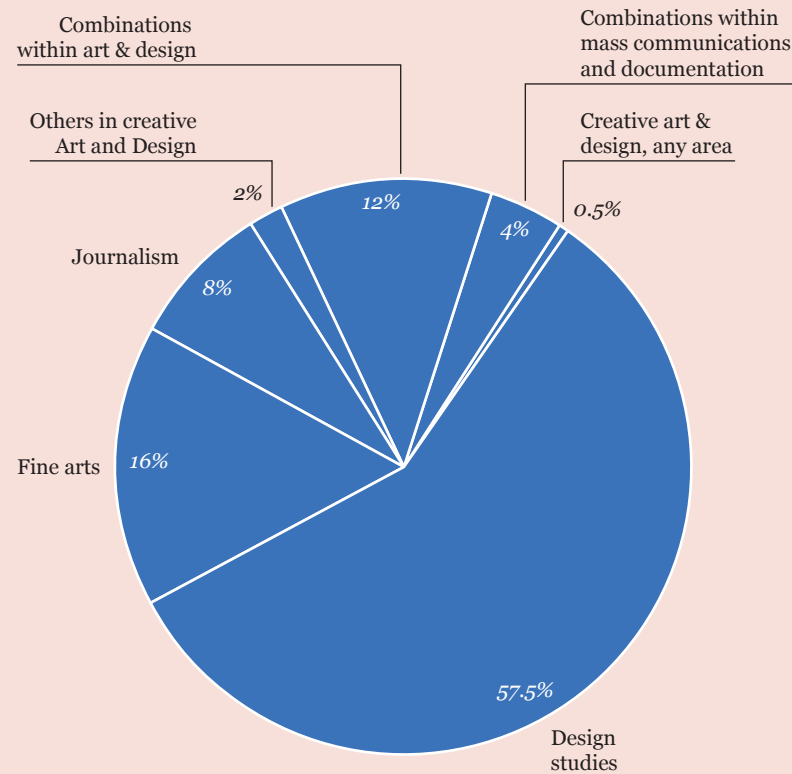
Named awards like foundation degrees, undergraduate degrees, postgraduate degrees fall into the Higher Education Academy's (HEA) definition of Arts HE. This includes courses with 'art', 'design' and 'media' in their title. Others refer to 'the arts', 'creative industry', 'communication', 'creative media' and so on³. There are considerable overlaps across disciplines. An example of this might be where performance and sonic arts are the subject of study and research in a fine arts department. Or another example might be acting and

DIAGRAM 2.1: *Students in HE by Higher Education Statistics Agency group, 2007/8*



music, despite there being considerable intersections in curricula, they are more likely to be studied in a school of drama and music or a conservatoire.

DIAGRAM 2.2: *Students entering art, design and media practice (exc: dance, drama and music) by University and Colleges Admissions Service groups) in 2008*



4 DCMS, (1998, 2001). *Creative Industries Mapping Document*. DCMS, London.

5 Towards the end of 2009, Peter Mandelson, at the time, the Secretary of State for Business, Innovation and Skills, announced that Skillfast-UK's licence to represent the fashion and textiles industry will be transferred to Skillset, the Sector Skills Council for Creative Media Industries. www.ukces.org.uk/press-release/sector-skills-councils-relicensing-decision-for-skillfast-uk-announced (accessed 30.01.10)

The grouping of courses by the Higher Education Academy (HEA) does not precisely align with those of other agencies, including HESA's groupings. Neither the HEA nor the HESA definition aligns with the generally accepted Department of Culture Media

and Sport list of thirteen creative industries⁴. Finally, there are also misalignments with other agencies: Sector Skills Councils, 'the voice' of industry sectors share the creative industries in yet different ways. Skillset includes all print, digital and lens-based media. E-Skills UK, the Sector Skills Council for Business and Information Technology are also implicated in creative industries, particularly in areas of digital and web design. Creative and Cultural Skills (CCSkills) is the Sector Skills Council for advertising, crafts, cultural heritage, design, literature, music, performing, and visual arts, but does not include fashion and textiles design which, until recently, was grouped with other textile-based, garment and footwear industries in Skillfast-UK⁵.

Types of institution may also be a factor in shaping student's experience, although this research has found no evidence of differences in terms of the type and level of creative industry engagement. The vast majority of students studying Arts HE subjects are studying at a polytechnic institution, an HEI offering a range of different subjects. These institutions are normally organised into faculties with subjects grouped together because they share knowledge, practice, pedagogies and/or the need for access to specialist facilities

and learning spaces. In the UK ‘art’ and ‘design’ are often grouped together and many art and design faculties (the actual faculty names vary) originated as independent art and design schools merged with local colleges to form polytechnics and universities.

So, most art design and media education is now delivered in what is known as the ‘Post-92’ or ‘new university’ sector⁶. Many media courses grew alongside or out of art and design subjects. Subjects often referred to as ‘media’ or ‘communication’ have emerged from print and lens-based practices like graphic design, illustration, and photography. This in turn led to subjects like web-design and digital animation. As an example, The London College of Communication began life in the 1890s as the St. Bride Foundation Institute Printing School. Today it offers a wide range of media-based courses including games design, film, TV and broadcast, digital media and journalism. It also retains courses in printmaking, print media and production. In other cases media subjects have developed independently and outside the context of Arts HE, retaining their independent identity, for example the London Film School.

There are several independent art and design schools in the UK. They are declining in number as

they merge with other institutions, but they still deliver Arts HE to around 27%⁷ of Arts HE students in the UK. Through their representative body UKADIA⁸ they remain an important ‘voice’ in the sector.

The range of subjects studied by students intending to pursue careers in the creative industries is as varied as activities in the industries are themselves. Subjects relate to core activities such as dance, music, furniture, jewellery making, ceramic design and painting. Many of these include specialist roles, for example; roles in TV and media such as writers, producers and costume design. There are also a growing numbers of courses with associated roles for creative industry. Examples include design management, curatorship and arts management. Courses range from dance and drama, to automotive design and fine art printing to radio production. These share remarkably similar teaching and learning contexts, so students in these subjects participate in similar learning activities. It is the course content and the specific learning environment that varies, rather than learning processes.

The way students in Arts HE learn is the result of decades of evolution⁹ but the modern educational project began to emerge in the late 1950 and 1960s. This is characterised by a move from instruction in

6 The 1992 Further and Higher Education Act (HMSO, London) formed a single unitary university funding body and allowed polytechnics to become universities with their own powers to award degrees. Since 1992 colleges and independent art and design schools have continued to seek university status.

7 This diagram is based on a review of HESA data and the websites of independent colleges.

8 UKADIA is the United Kingdom Arts and Design Institutions Association, it represents most, but not all of the UK's independent art and design schools. ‘Independent’ means not part of a polytechnic institution, that is, an HEI delivers only art, design and media subjects.

9 See: *Looking Out: Arts HE and the Creative industries*, available to download from the ADM-HEA website.

¹⁰ Historically art and design was taught instructively with students' work being corrected at the easel and drawing board. Today students are instructed in lectures or in technical aspects of their practice, for example, in the safe use of workshop equipment and using cameras. In discursive teaching the student learns through discussion with teachers, their peers, work-based colleagues and so on. Typically, problem-based and project-based learning employ discursive techniques. The simplest definition of enquiry-based learning is learning-through-doing. It is important to note that instructive and discursive methods are not intended to denote 'bad' or 'good' teaching. The type of learning and teaching process should be aligned with the kinds of things being learned, thus there are times when instruction can be the most appropriate approach.

¹¹ In the 1990s Dr. K. Anders Ericsson, Professor of Psychology at Florida State University pointed out that whilst accumulated knowledge and skills are a factor in development, becoming expert in one's domain requires the ability to synthesise, make qualitative judgments, organise knowledge and apply it in new contexts the acquisition of these abilities being largely dependant on repeated practice. See: www.psy.fsu.edu/faculty/ericsson/ericsson.exp.perf.html (accessed 10.01.10).

drawing, delivered by a cadre of full time trained art teachers, to a discursive form of education. This included the growing practice of employing practitioners, working painters, product designers, furniture makers and film-makers and so on to teach their respective skills. This was the first time in the long history of Arts HE, despite successive interventions by governments in the previous 100 years, that industry was directly and systematically engaged in formal art and design and media education.

The learning processes in Arts HE are a mix of instructive, discursive and enquiry-led learning and teaching¹⁰. Students learn through simulation of professional practice, supported by critical, cultural and historical and business studies; learning is in specialist departments and delivered by specialist teachers. The Looking Out research shows that the majority of these teachers maintain practical connections with non-teaching professional practice in creative and cultural businesses and organisations. What this means in practice is that Arts HE students learn both about and through their practice. They attend lectures and seminars to learn theory, facts and the history of their subjects. They also learn how the law, health and safety and business practices relate to

their disciplines. This is instructive learning and the knowledge is declarative. It is based on facts, accepted practice and technical skills. The students learn to be experts in the 'crafts' in their discipline; learning how to use tools and materials such as cameras, computer software or sound recording equipment. This is known as deliberate practice¹¹. Arts HE students also learn a range of skills common to all undergraduates. They develop analytical skills and learn to express themselves verbally and in writing. They learn team-working skills, as well as how to use a wide range of resources for research. These might include libraries and on-line resources. They also learn how to use specialist archives, collections and museums as resources for research, and these may include collections of textiles and garments (such as the V&A), film and sound archives (such as the British Film Institute) and design collections (such as the Design Museum).

Declarative knowledge and deliberate practice are applied in project-based learning. Students often work on projects simulating those undertaken in 'professional' practice situations. They may be based on 'real' briefs taken from industry, competitions, or be set by professional practitioners. Projects are

almost always undertaken in spaces that relate closely to professional environments: in dance, design or recording studios, metal or ceramics workshops, drama or TV theatres, in computer ‘labs’ or edit suites. Projects assist students in developing expertise in specific aspects of practice, for example applying and developing expertise in digital design, working with materials or business skills. Projects might be built around specific problems, for example to find a design solution for the disabled or to make a film based on a text. They may be set with a confined budget, with particular materials or manufacturing processes or they might be more thematically based. These include, for example, issues of sustainability, social inclusion, or globalisation. They may also be based on a combination of any of these or other themes. Projects always require students to integrate and synthesise the knowledge and skills they have learned from other contexts and practice. However, the unique aspect of project-based learning is that there is almost never a single correct solution in a project. Divergent thinking is a characteristic of both learning and practice in Arts HE and the creative industries¹².

Projects are undertaken in social contexts. Even when not working in teams, students work

alongside their peers. In this way, they can see what others are doing and discuss their work. Alternatively they can have more formal discussions with their teachers. Significantly, the conversations with their teachers are not instructive, rarely is there any intention to ‘correct’ mistakes. The intention is to explore and test ideas and discuss whether the creative outputs, the product (whether this is, a painting, a design for building or a piece of jewellery or animation) is reflecting the ideas and intentions of the creator, whether it is appropriate to the intended audience, users, or consumers, and whether it competently completes the task. Tasks might include using resources efficiently, working within a budget, creating something safe or demonstrates an awareness of sustainable production. Conversations with peers and tutorials with teachers are accompanied by formal presentations of project work to groups of teachers and other students. These ‘crits’ (from critique) often include guest critics. Sometimes they may also be teachers that are not directly involved in the projects. It is common for guest critics to be invited from industry and practice. Most of the teachers involved in both project-based learning contexts, in lectures and seminars and in workshops are either teacher-

¹² David Kolb proposed that learning from experience was at least as important as other formal types of learning. He proposed that experiential learning followed a cycle of “experiencing: reflecting: generalising and applying”. He says that experiential learning is closely related to enquiry-based learning. Kolb further proposed that different disciplines had different approaches to applying experience to finding solutions. Simply put, subjects like arts and humanities tend towards divergent, multiple solutions and science and engineering tend towards convergent single solutions. This was not implying that one was better than the other, but that knowledge was constructed in context and its application was related to domains and disciplines. For an explanation of how Kolb’s ideas of experiential learning are applied to project-based learning see: Clews, D. (2003), *Imaging in Education: imaging in preliminary-level studio design technology projects*, Art, Design & Communication in Higher Education, 2 (1).

practitioners or have substantial professional practice experience. Most students participate in learning in the workplace to supplement experiences in the university and college studio, lab and workshop.

Project-based learning encourages students to think creatively and seek innovative solutions to problems. In this case, problems are not predetermined and creativity is as much a process of problem finding, as it one of problem solving. Projects therefore hone students' reflective and analytical skills through iterative processes of examining work, testing against given, and self-determined criteria, and making revisions as a consequence of these examinations. Students learn to be articulate and communicate their intentions and ideas. They communicate with their peers, their teachers, technicians who assist them in studios, workshops and labs. They also communicate with suppliers and consultants who assist them in producing their work. Developing expert knowledge and skills is therefore both the engine and the outcome of creative practice.

Students learn to make formal presentations, to 'pitch' their work through verbal and visual tools and through practical demonstrations. They learn to work in teams, listen to and react to the advice and

comments of experts, work to deadlines and within budgets. They learn to be expert in the craft of their discipline whether their craft is working in wood, casting or using software, for example. These skills or crafts are not limited or circumscribed by the job; if you are a furniture maker, sculptor or animator you might borrow 'crafts' from other practices. In this way, jewellers may become experts in mass production in plastics, painters may become expert photographers, and digital animators may work with physical models. There may be a set of skills at the core of a subject or practice, but creators will self-determine the skills they need in order to explore new ideas.

Although Arts HE students attend lectures and participate in seminars, project work is likely to make up the majority of their university and college learning. Normally this will be at least 50%, but may be as much as 90% of their assessed work. At one time considered marginal, business skills, how to run a small business, draft a business plan, how to raise a grant or manage a social enterprise, health and safety and working with manufacturers, have come to assume an increasingly important part of the curriculum. Most courses related to business studies are delivered by specialists, most of whom are practitioners in creative industries.

Some more specialised courses, for example, courses in law and business administration may be delivered by non-subject specialists from industries or other faculties in the HEI.

Work placements are typical features of Arts HE. At their best they allow students to develop their technical skills and knowledge in non-academic contexts. Not all students will work in commercial contexts but their placements may include undertaking and contributing to projects that have real clients, consumers and audiences. However, placements are difficult to manage and ensure that all students get a good experience. There is evidence that poor placement experiences can be a disincentive to students¹³.

Delivering authentic work-based learning is only one of the challenges for Arts HE. It's a challenge to ensure that teachers (including those who are teacher practitioners) have up-to-date knowledge of their practices and their industry specialism. Maintaining students' access to industry standards, including equipment and facilities is equally challenging. Despite a range of quality assurance processes (that aim to continuously monitor and act as mechanisms for enhancing the curriculum as well as students' experience and graduate attributes) there is evidence that these

processes are a disincentive to forming more effective engagements. Difficulties in providing industry-standard knowledge, facilities and equipment are specifically cited as a barrier to developing workforce development.

¹³ Recent work carried out for the Cambridge-MIT Exchange which examined how work experience shaped the learning of 400 UK engineering students noted that “while work placement can have a major effect on self-efficacy, a foundation of future innovative behaviours, those factors are all too often not present in the work placements made in the UK.” Lucas, W., Cooper S., Ward, T., Cave F. *Industry Placement, Authentic Experience and the Development of Venturing and Technology Self-Efficacy*, International Journal of Business Science and Applied Management, 29:11, November 2009, p 738-752.