



Creative Challenge
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UCA
university for the **creative arts**

Creative Challenge Research Report

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Entrepreneurship Group

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www.analysis.creativechallenge.info



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1. Introduction

The exploratory research tries to understand a tripartite relationship between the academic, the creative industry employer and the student and their expectations within it. The role of the student being an important one here in this mix as embodying academic education and rigour, but also a potential future employee with appropriate enterprise skills. It further tries to understand how an entrepreneurship programme, such as the Creative Challenge, can add value in this relationship and explore its role. From feedback of those students who have participated in the Creative Challenge, we know that it had a whole range of perceived benefits, including the development of new skills, better learning strategies, increased confidence, a clearer understanding of how their creative skills can potentially be applied in the world outside university. Finally the research touches on the relationship between entrepreneurship education and creative arts education.

2. Context

2.1 Art and Design schools

The University for the Creative Arts (UCA) has its origin in the establishment of the British art and design schools in the 19th century, in part a response to the requirements of industry under pressure from European trade. Before 1830 there were no art schools, except a handful, outside London. By comparison France had over eighty schools in the provinces. It is only after the 1835/6 Select Committee on Arts and Manufactures that the establishment of a system of public art and design education in Britain commenced properly. The remit and title was: *"Enquire into the best means of extending a knowledge of the Arts and the principles of Design among the people, especially the manufacturing population of the country"*. Subsequently the Normal or Government School of Design in London in 1837 was founded, later receiving the Royal Charter and called the Royal Society of Art, followed by the steady expansion of the system over the course of the nineteenth century, with art schools being opened in most major towns and cities throughout the country (around 120 at the beginning of the 20th century) leading to the Great Exhibition in 1851.

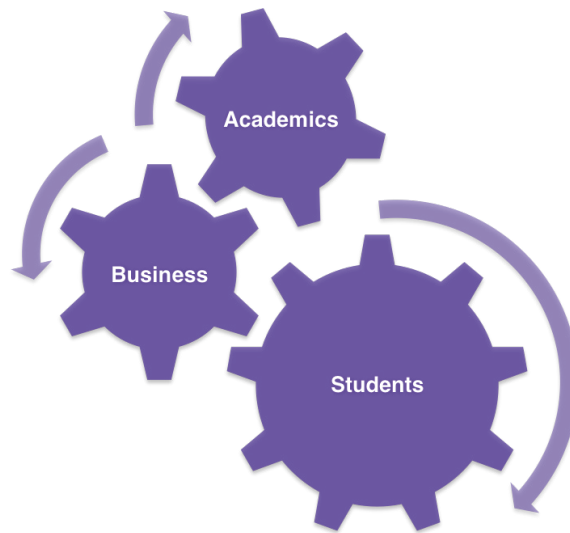
2.2 Reaching out to business and the community

It is in this tradition, the encouragement of the arts, finding integrity and purpose to engage with industry and establish a distinct British school of the arts and design, that UCA has its roots. The relatively recent integration of the British art and design schools into the Higher Education system, turning them into specialist higher education institutions or universities, brought them into the broader discussion of universities' role in the economy and the wider society. In the early 1990s the British Government introduced a specific, albeit relatively small, funding stream into the higher education called Higher

Education Reach Out to Business and the Community (HEROBC) fund to leverage higher education expertise and resources for the benefit of the economy and society more directly. A number of other initiatives and bodies were set before and after, for example the Council for Industry and Higher Education (CIHE) in 1986.

In summary, the debate of the application of knowledge and skills in the context of business and society, is by no means a new debate and continues to be located in the tripartite relationship between academic, business and student.

Fig 1. Tripartite Relationship



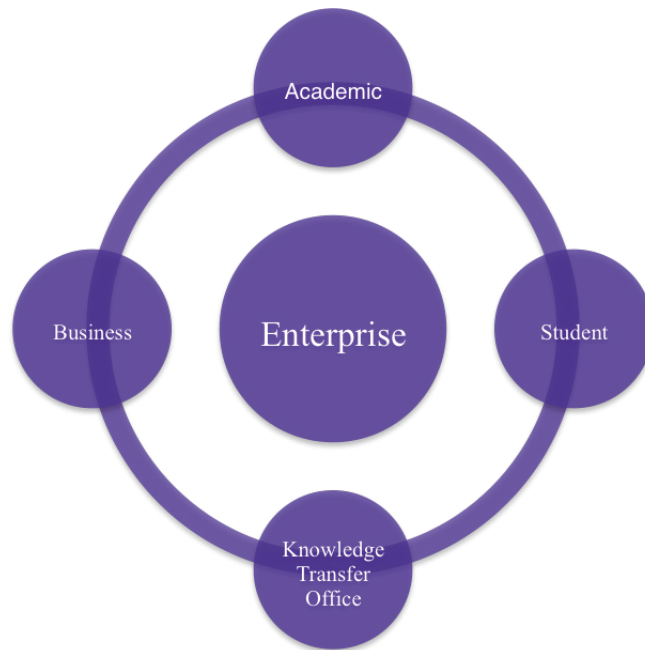
2.3. The Creative Industries and creative jobs

The creative industries remain a growth sector with over 2 million people working in the creative industries and creative positions in non-creative industries. (See the Department for Culture, Media and Sport for the latest statistics at www.culture.gov.uk). The creative industries are central to the British knowledge and innovation economy, which needs design, creative and innovation skills (see *Cox Review of Creativity in Business*, 2006; NESTA reports: *Hidden innovation in the creative industries*, July 2008; *The art of innovation*, September 2008; *Arts and humanities research and innovation*, November 2008). The creative industries need graduates, for example between 80 and 90% of the computer games and animation industry workforce are graduates (see *Skillsets' Labour Market Intelligence Digests*).

2.4 Entrepreneurship intervention

However, it is also in this context that universities were encouraged through the so-called third stream funds (HEROBC, HEIF 1–4) to establish business development, industry liaison, knowledge transfer, enterprise offices or similar offices. These are often charged with co-ordinating and developing schemes that help to facilitate the relationship between academic programmes, business and the community. With increasing debate on the role of enterprise in universities, these offices and units often became conduits between the various stakeholders, including bespoke enterprising schemes for students.

Fig 2. Enterprise in Universities



Like many other universities, UCA set up an enterprise competition and programme (Creative Challenge, formerly the Creative Innovation Award) for its students addressing issues around the world of work (employability, self-employment, enterprising skills, business start-up etc). There was pressing relevance to this in the context of a creative arts institution. Research at the time showed that (Destinations and reflections, 1999) many art and design graduates moved into self-employment:

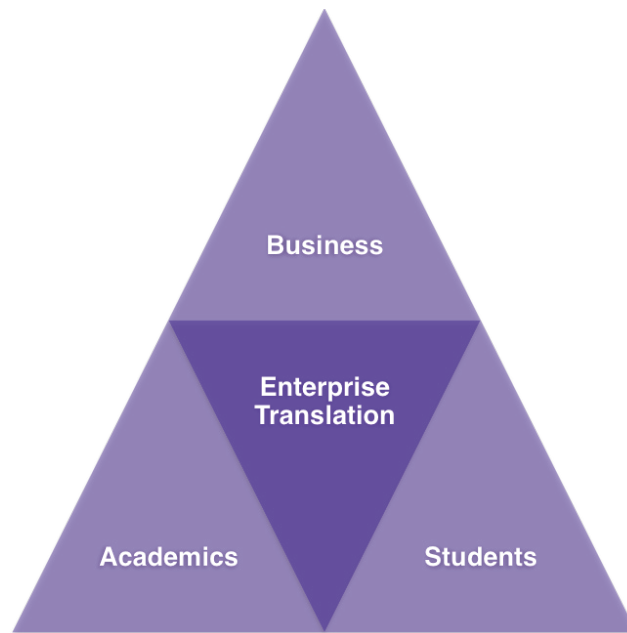
- 42% of art and design graduates had had some form of self-employment since graduating and 10% had operated their own businesses.
- 20% were self-employed freelance or working on commissions at the time of the survey, in some cases alongside salaried work.

The research was updated in 2010. The Creative Futures Creative Graduates research found that this pattern of forms of employment had not changed: 'just under one half of all graduates had worked on a freelance basis (45 per cent) and around one quarter had started a business during their early careers'.

There is some debate as to how much of the entrepreneurship agenda should be fully embedded into the curriculum, including in art and design education, and how. There is also some evidence that enterprise or knowledge transfer type units can play an important role in providing the necessary 'translation' between academic, business and student. Carey (*Enterprise curriculum for creative industries students – An exploration of current attitudes and issues*, 2006) found that recent graduates in the arts described the need for translators: individuals with an understanding of business and art, to be involved with their enterprise education. And research undertaken into entrepreneurship in the art and design higher education by the Higher Education Academy Art

Design Media Subject Centre (HEA-ADM) and the National Endowment for Science, Technology and the Arts (NESTA) in 2007 found that 'the majority of entrepreneurship teaching and learning skills are delivered through a subject-specific module for entrepreneurship and are integrated into practice-based and project-based learning, rather than being part of a general business studies course'. It also found that only 10% of entrepreneurship learning is delivered by specialists and recommended that entrepreneurship needs to be more explicit in the arts curriculum.

Fig 3. Enterprise Translation



2.5 Researching entrepreneurship intervention

In 2009 UCA received a small research fund from the Higher Education Entrepreneurship Group (HEEG) with a contribution from UCA's own Learning and Teaching Research Fund. The funds helped to investigate the enterprise experience of creative arts students who participated in the Creative Challenge competition and to commence developing case studies and resources that could provide some further assistance to UCA and other universities in developing enterprise-related learning and teaching strategies and approaches in art and design education. But the research also seeks to encourage academic debate of entrepreneurship education which goes beyond financial business skills and establishes itself as credible by adding intellectual value to arts education (see for example Beckmann, G.D., Cherwitz, R.A. *Advancing the authentic: intellectual entrepreneurship and the role of the business school in fine arts entrepreneurship curriculum design*, 2009). A number of small scale surveys and interviews targeting students, academics and creative industry employers were carried out in order to articulate a few key messages underpinned by some literature research.

3. The Research Findings

As part of the research four online surveys relating to Creative Challenge programme were carried out.

The four sample groups were creative industry employers, UCA academics, UCA students and graduates that had entered the competition and a significant sample that had not.

There are six databases of results, which are:

- 1 Academics
- 2 Employers
- 3 Student/Graduates who entered the competition - long survey results
- 4 Student/Graduates who entered the competition - short survey results
- 5 Student/Graduates who did not enter the competition - long survey results
- 6 Student/Graduates who did not enter the competition - short survey results

This analysis provides comparisons between the expectations of the academics, students and employers. It also makes reference to other national studies and some related literature. The sample size for each group (around 20 but over 100 of last database) is not sufficient to provide a statistically robust result; therefore responses should be regarded only as indicative and explorative. Not all data can be presented here but some key findings will be discussed.

3.1 Family background

Intuitively one would expect that those students who showed an interest in the enterprise competition would be more likely to have some sort of entrepreneurial family background.

So, it may be significant that those entering the competition had a greater family history of entrepreneurship than those that did not, with almost 60% having a self-employed relative compared with just fewer than 50% amongst those not entering. There seems to be some evidence in the research literature, for example Carr & Sequeira (Prior family business exposure as intergenerational influence and entrepreneurial intent: A theory of Planned Behavior approach, *Journal of Business Research*, 2007), who investigated exposure to family business found that it serves as an important intergenerational influence on intentions to become an entrepreneur. On the other hand a recent study of the Kauffman Foundation (*The Anatomy of an Entrepreneur: Family Background and Motivation*, 2009), found that almost 52% of the respondents (business founders) were the first in their family to start-up a business.

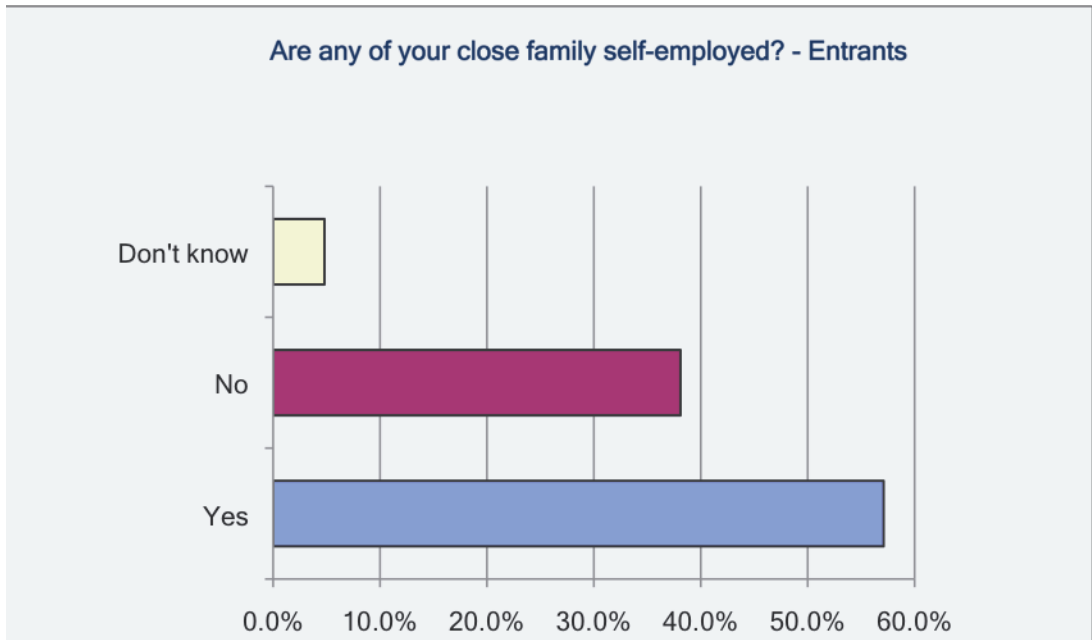


Fig 4. Family Background – Competition Entrants

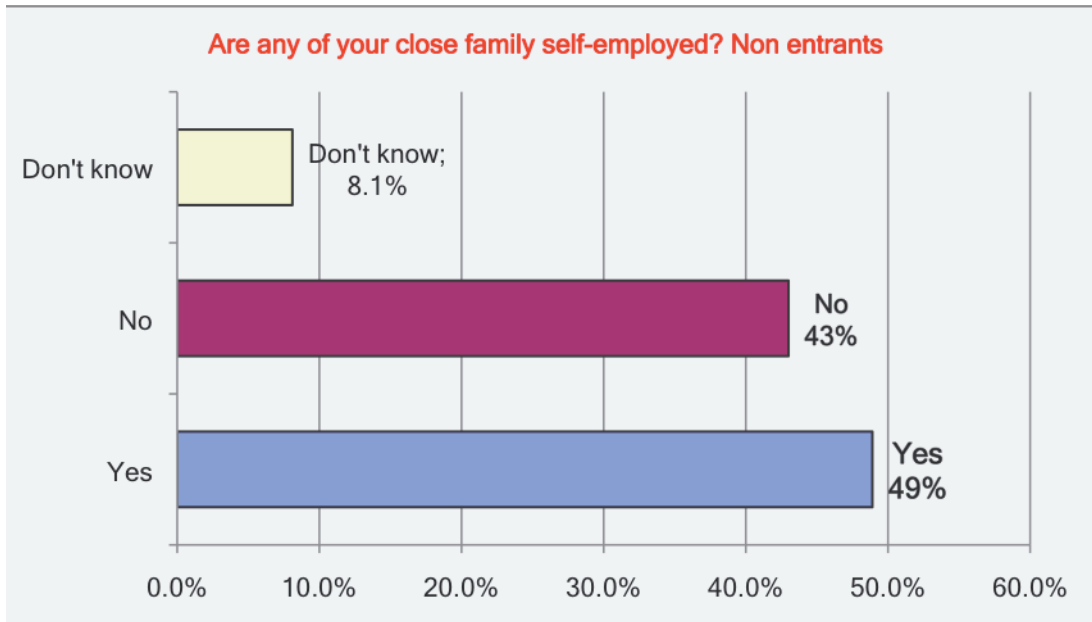


Fig.5 Family Background – Non-Competition Entrants

3.2 Creative Destinations

The recent Creative Graduates Creative Futures (2009) found that 73% had worked in the creative industries since graduating, in their discipline of study and mostly paid work (68%) rather than unpaid. This is confirmed by our small sample of graduates that had participated in the competition. The entrants who answered the survey were more positive, and because many had completed their studies this can be expected. It shows a positive outcome from their studies. Their creative roles in employment are detailed in the table below.

Fig 6. Employment in Creative Roles

- Yes, I'm a self-employed artist. I use a lot of the organisational skills I learnt at UCA, especially applying for grants and commissions.

- Designing for 3 newspapers.
- From September I will work as a lecturer in two Lithuanian universities, and as well I am freelancing as storyboarding artist.
- CAD drafting.
- Yes, as a PR and Marketing Assistant. My role involves designing promotional material and marketing services.
- Only a little. It does involve advising customers on furnishing their interiors for which I use some knowledge I learnt in the first year.
- Interior Designer.
- Yes I'm an expert in an art shop in central London
- Myself and another UCA graduate produce back to basics manufacturing machines and tooling, primarily for the educational market.
- I now teach Art and Design
- Yes. Sales Advisor in a store selling Interior Design Products.

3.3 Exposure to business

3.3.1 Work placements

The CBI/UUK report FutureFit: Preparing graduates for the world of work (2009), found that 'two fifths (42%) of students feel skills development has been explicitly addressed on their course - but more could be done, with a further 28% feeling that this is something they would like to have been offered. There is stronger unmet demand for special, stand-alone employability programmes (just 11% are currently involved or expect to be – but a further 35% would take the opportunity if they could), internships (30% do so, 34% would like the opportunity), short periods of work experience (28% and 33% respectively) and sandwich years (15% and 23% respectively). The vast majority of students who had undertaken a specific programme to help develop their employability skills found them either very useful or quite useful in helping them understand the skills they would need to help secure work after graduation'. This is confirmed by the Creative Graduates Creative Futures (2010) research: 'Graduates were asked how useful their placement experiences were to the development of their careers. The vast majority (85 per cent) of those undertaking a placement felt they were very or fairly useful'. There is also some evidence that work placements help in

enhancing the quality of the degree work, at least in the engineering discipline (see Brown, G. & Ahmed, Y. *The value of work placements*, in *Enhancing the Learner Experience in Higher Education Volume 1*, Number 1, 2009). Yet, one should also note that there is no specific legal framework for work placements, falling between education and employment (see Endsleigh report *Class of 2010*, 2010).

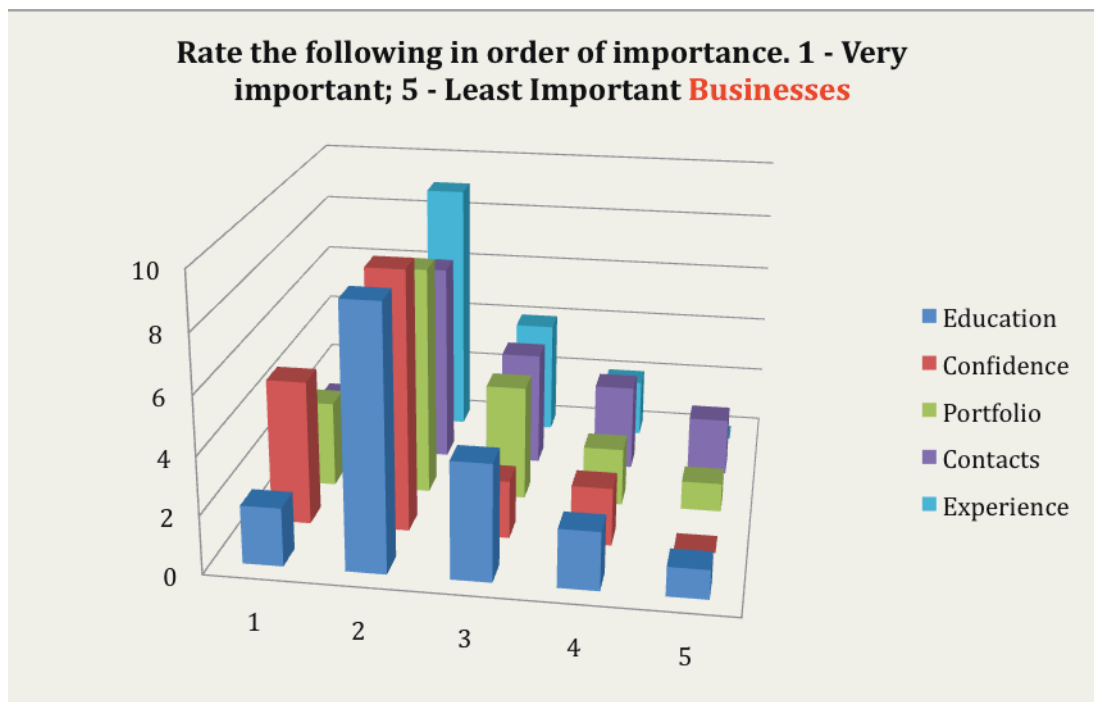
In terms of our own survey work placements or internships, the education cycle had yet to reach a point where non-entrants were engaged in placements in great numbers. Only 20% had undertaken placements compared with 68% of entrants many of who had completed their degrees or were in the final stages. Many from both groups had undertaken work to support their studies and some of that work had been in the creative sector, but in the main it was doing jobs that appeared convenient to fit in with studies.

When asked to rank what they sought in terms of personal qualities from a graduate, the businesses responded as per the chart below. It highlights that experience is a key issue; possibly slightly greater than education and certainly more than the person's portfolio. Those entering the workplace directly from continued compulsory and higher education will lack appropriate experience without it being actively addressed during their studies.

It is of interest that the perceptions of the academics are somewhat similar to those of businesses but do not give sufficient weighting to the experience or confidence elements that businesses demand. The two charts demonstrating the business and academic responses are shown below.

Given the views of the businesses it therefore appears essential that some form of experiential interlude/module is included in the HE cycle with significant input from employers.

Fig 7. Ranking Issues – Businesses



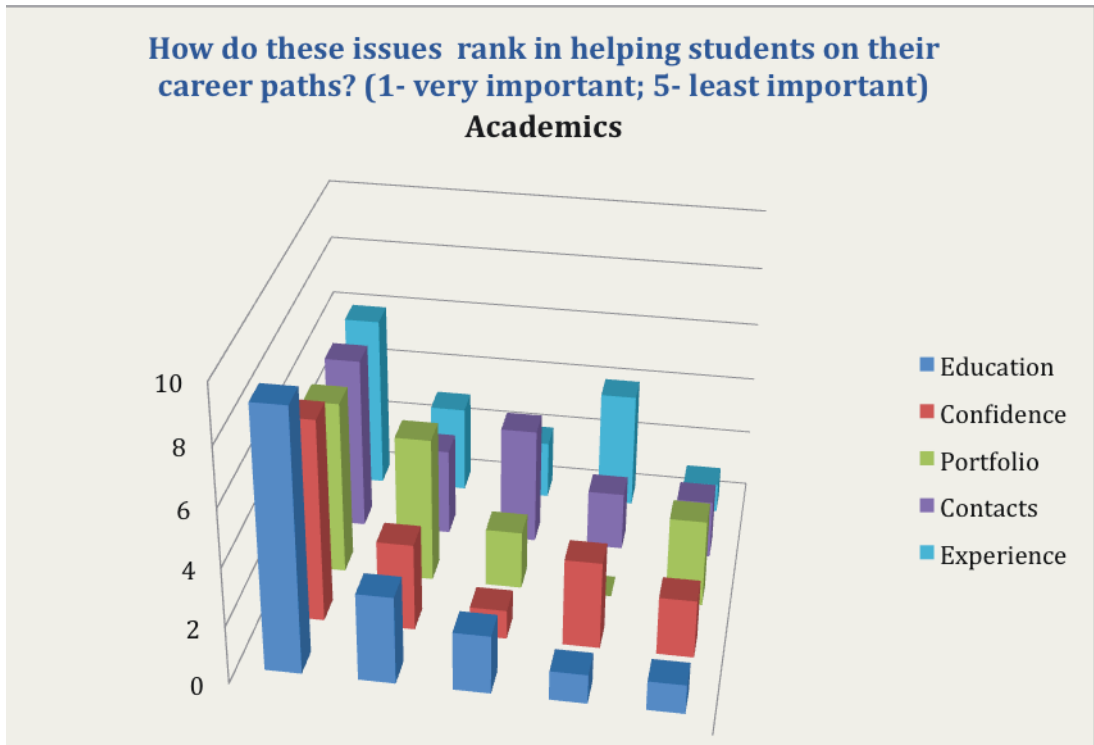


Fig 8. Ranking Issues – Academics

3.3.2 Design briefs

In the art and design disciplines the application of creative skills is normally managed through design briefs and their appropriate interpretation. The design brief is therefore a crucial aspect in working with business clients (see Christiaans, H., *Creativity in Design* (PhD Thesis), Delft University of Technology, Delft, The Netherlands 1992; and Dorst, K. and Cross, N. *Creativity in the design process: co-evolution of problem – solution*, *Design Studies*, 22(5), pp. 425–437, 2001). However, only 33% of survey respondents who participated in the competition had experience of being set design briefs externally.

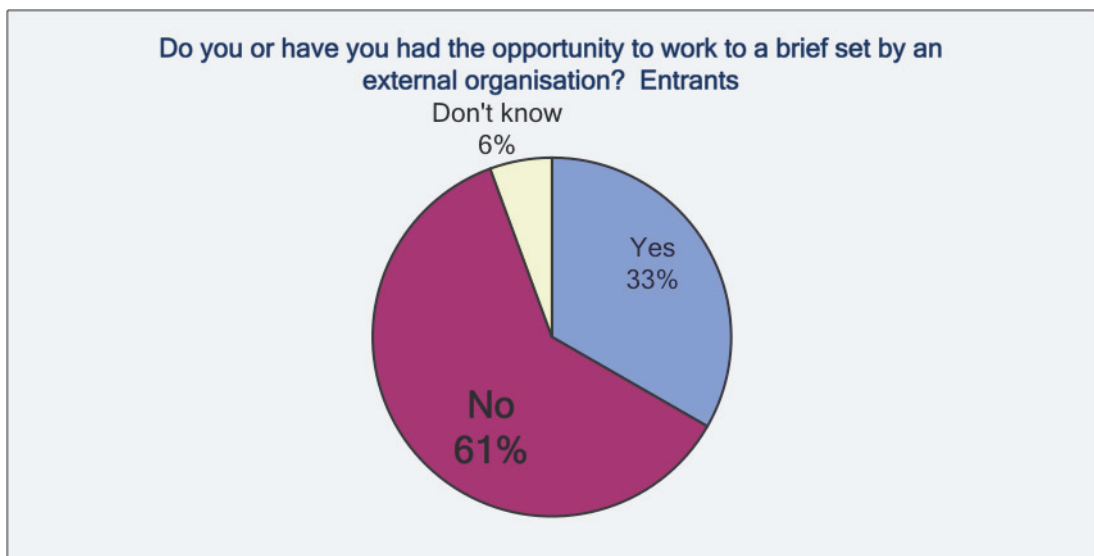


Fig 9. Design Briefs – Competition Entrants

3.3.3 Industry lectures and mentoring

A further important vehicle in art and design education to interact with industry is through industry guest lectures and mentoring opportunities. Most academics in the survey believed their course worked to forge links with businesses through talks, mentoring, participation and internships. However, both samples had only limited exposure to interacting with businesses, whether with guest lecturers or working with mentors. Only half of the entrants had received external mentoring and 74% had attended guest lectures. Only 34% of non-entrants had attended industry guest lectures (see charts below).

Fig 10. Industry Support – Competition Entrants

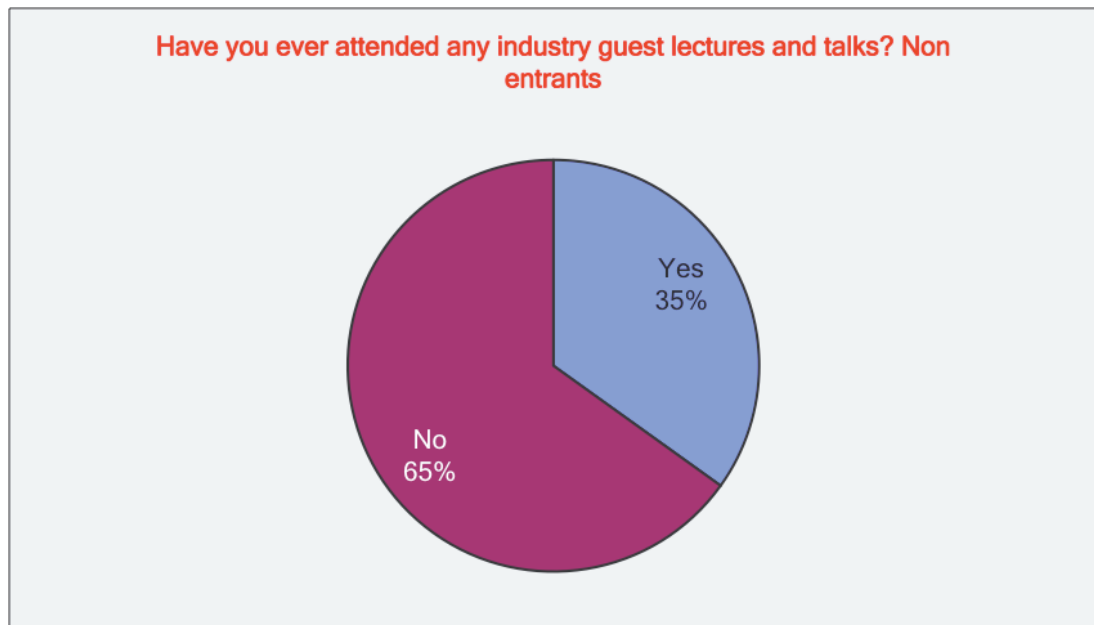
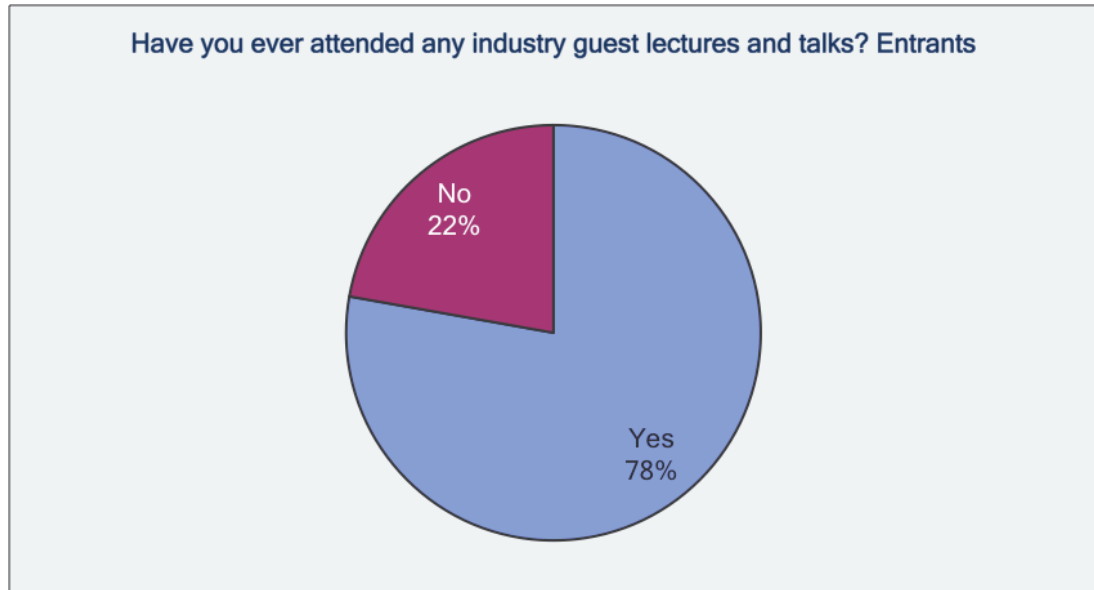


Fig 11. Industry Support – Non-Competition Entrants

Those entrants that had attended guest lectures predominantly found them valuable and helpful as demonstrated in this table below.

Fig 12. Importance of Guest Lectures

- Very useful tips, networking and knowing how other people got to where they are now.
- It was valuable to hear first hand the details of different job roles available in the industry and what is expected in a role.
- Important.
- At the time it seemed relevant, but looking back it feels as if they were all of the same content, nothing of great importance.
- Good for meeting people, though a lot of people in the industry tend to ignore students.
- Often they have been very inspirational.
- Sometimes, very other times not.
- Very valuable.
- Very valuable since you could hear the professionals talk about conceptual, theoretical and practical issues of architecture and art.
- Extremely important. They helped me at the time with direction and motivation, and even now I think back to certain lectures and recite relevant information.
- Very valuable!!! Probably the most valuable lectures are from those who are actually in industry.

Most academics in our survey believed their course do forge links with businesses through talks, mentoring, participation and internships. However, there are clearly a number of businesses that do not engage and this is shown below indicating that almost two thirds of businesses would like more engagement with universities. There appears to be a large number of businesses ready to participate in university/ industry links. The challenge presenting itself to universities and businesses is in making the best use of these potential links.

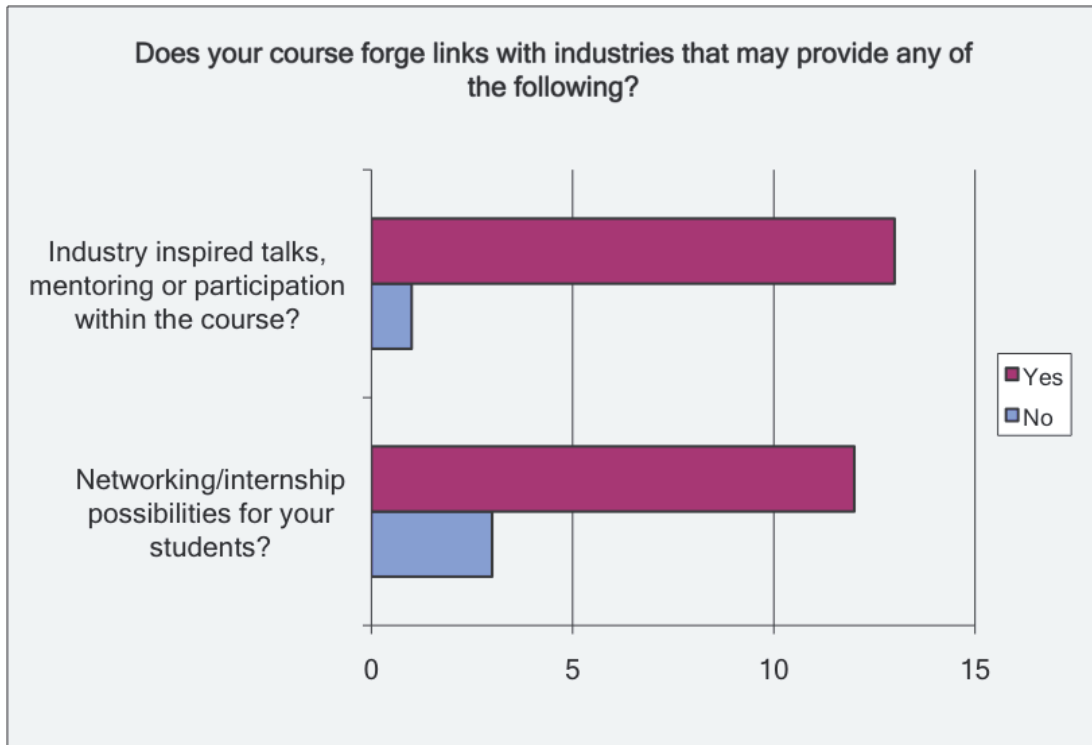


Fig 13. Course/Industry Relationships

Employers were challenged to tell how they engaged with universities and institutions. Of the 16 that answered, they gave mixed attitudes from very positive to ambivalent. Their comments are detailed in the table below.

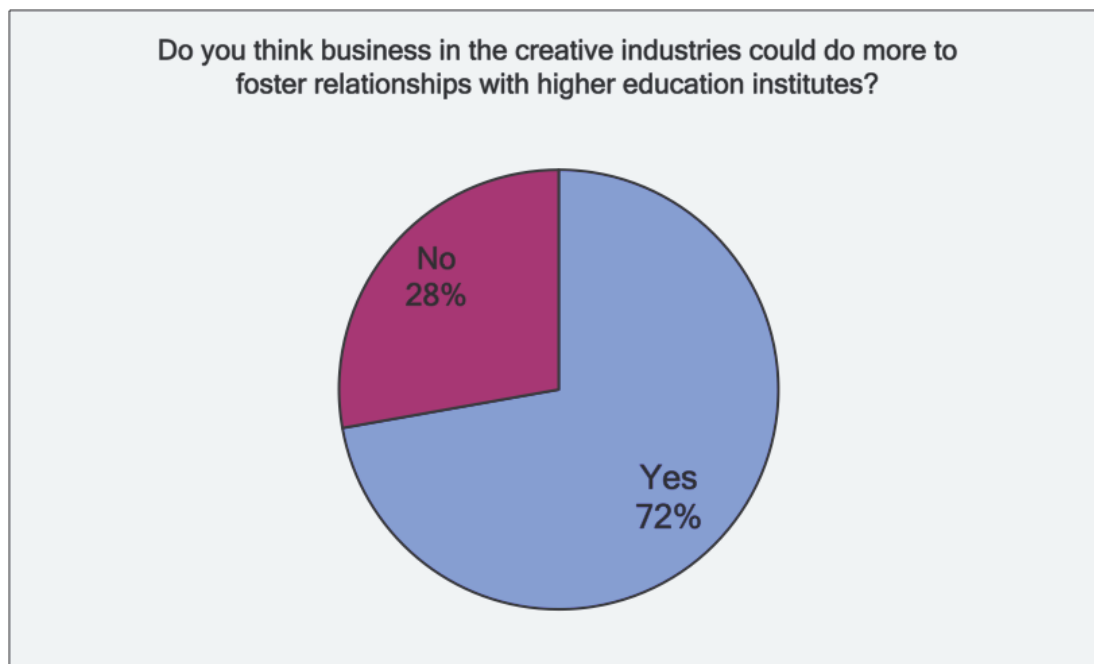
Fig 14. Engagement with Universities – Employers Attitudes

- We take a lot of students on work experience; I also sit on a business advisory panel to some of the courses at UCA. We meet once a year.
- I teach at UCA and London College of Fashion on a regular basis.
- We run our own Masters programme, in conjunction with Middlesex University.
- Mentor and feedback. Talks and other collaborations.
- We would like to set up partnerships with local universities. Not as easy as it should be - Universities can be very closed shops.
- Internships, work experience, drop in sessions, lectures. We also have partnership with 2 universities and another wants us to be one of their 12 industry experts.
- We avoid University Undergraduates and concentrate on school kids encouraging them to study those harder subjects of Maths, Physics, Chemistry and Biology.
- We set college briefs, sponsor local college awards, critique student work, summer placements, work experience, gifting of books to local students.

- We offer a large number of work placements. We currently have two students in our office this week. These placements are with schools, colleges and Universities.
- We don't I'm afraid.
- Does not engage.
- Occasionally we offer projects to graduates.
- We've not had time to actively pursue this however neither have any universities approached us. We do take students on work experience every year.
- We offer internships; work in partnership with universities (Uni of Kent and Christchurch University). I sit on the industrial panel for Digital Media UK.

In relation to this mixed attitude it is surprising to find that 72% of employers felt they should do more to foster relationships with higher education.

Fig 15. Relationships with Higher Education – Employers



When asked how they could engage, one employer observed that they felt they were in competition for the same work; another said education should reach out to them.

They said:

Fig 16. Engagement with Universities - Employers Attitudes

- It works both ways. Education decision makers need to come to the table as well.
- More visiting lectures, discussing the reality of the world of work, not just the creative process.
- Make time to engage.
- Lecturing, setting briefs and qualifying results, drop in sessions.
- Too many higher education institutes compete with the private sector.
- Yes and no really. There are now more students than businesses and the industry can accommodate. We do what we can but I see many graduates following other career paths now therefore it is more important that they understand the opportunities open to them after a degree rather than just the design industry – portable skills.
- Understand the opportunity and see the benefit.
- More open opportunities for collaboration.
- I would do more but I get the impression (I could be wrong) that students are not prepared for deadlines, budgets, and being creative in a short time span – i.e. producing the best job in the time available.
- Perhaps it should be the other way around; the education institutes could perhaps greater efforts to find out what businesses really need.
- Offer placements, get involved with courses, offer open days, offer workshops, and talk directly with Students about what we are looking for.

Engaging with local business is often a convenient way for students to gain entrepreneurial skills and work experience and supports most universities' aim to make a contribution to the local economy and the wider community. Yet, those students surveyed, who had not entered the Creative Challenge competition, had no opportunity to engage locally so far.



Fig 17. Business Relationships – Students

3.3.4 Skills for work

The Creative Graduates Creative Futures (2010) research found that ‘graduates were most satisfied with the core creative and intellectual skills that are fundamental to creative practice: creativity and innovation (54 per cent), visual skills (44 per cent) and presenting work and ideas (43 per cent), all of which were rated as being very well developed. Research skills, critical thinking, collaborating with others and making/design skills were also considered to be well developed. Areas considered to be less well developed were mainly in professional skills: IT/software skills (19 per cent not at all compared to 14 per cent very well developed), understanding client needs (18 per cent compared to 11 per cent) and networking (20 per cent compared to eight per cent)’.

Although our own survey did not cover exactly the same skill set nor the satisfaction rate and considering that some of the generic skills needed by students in the workplace are probably covered, in part, in organising the students’ studies and works rather than the broader skills needed in the workplace, there is some similarity in the findings.

Non-entrants felt their studies included the skills shown in the chart below with the emphasis falling on creative aspects and less on business applications. Employers, as can be seen further below, do not particularly emphasise presentation as a primary skill.

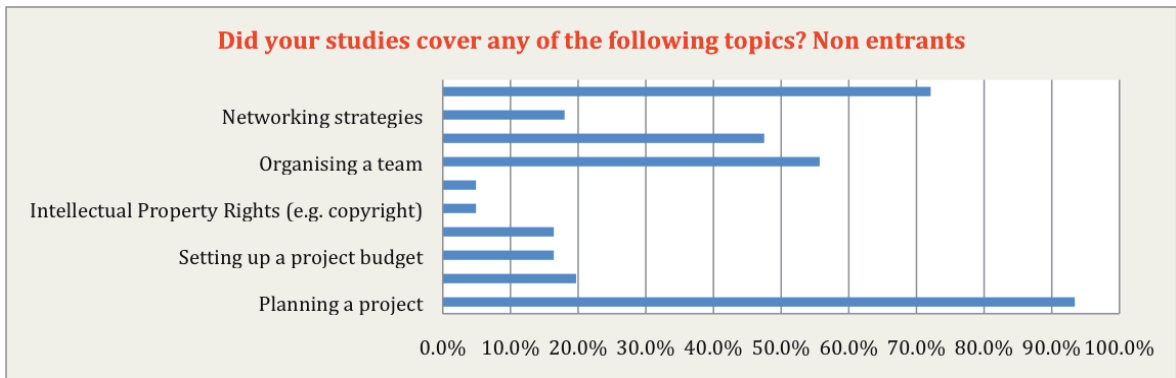


Fig 18. Skills for Work –
Non-Competition Entrants

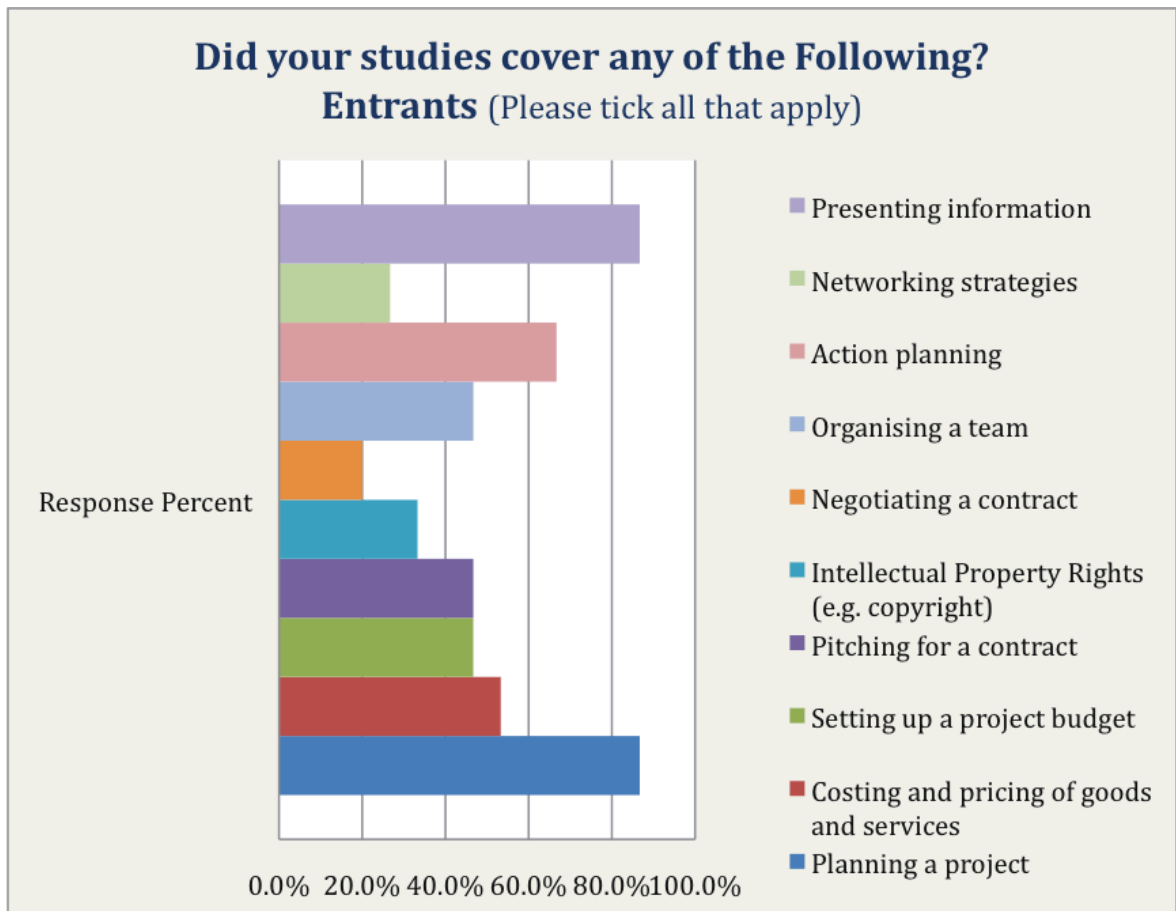


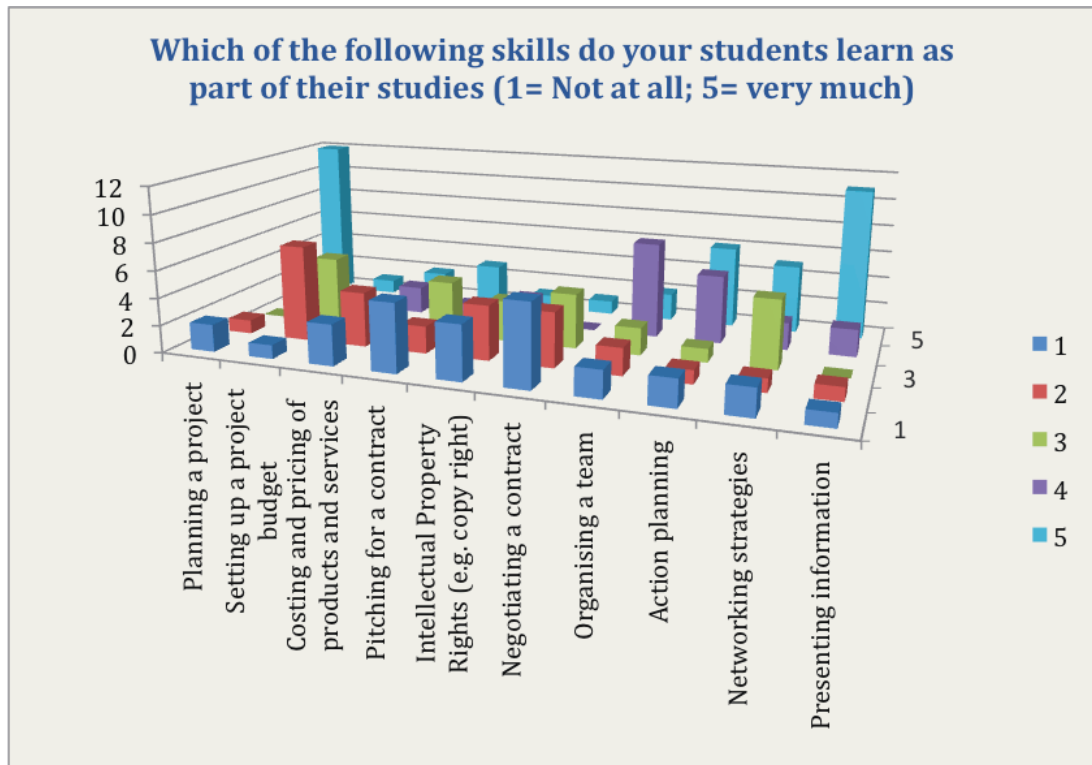
Fig 19. Skills for Work –
Competition Entrants

Broadly, with the non-entrants, it appears that they were too early in their courses to state that their studies covered other aspects of creative business skills.

A similar, but less polarised result was given by the entrants with the planning, action planning and presentation skills being the most taught.

The responses are similar to the responses we received from the academics. There is some disparity between these skills and those businesses express a need for (see below). The emphasis seems to be on the planning of a project and the presenting of the result.

Fig 20. Skills for Work – Academics



Academics were asked to consider the findings of the previous question and expressed a view on how the development of the skills set should be supported. 69% felt that the university should provide more central support to deliver the skills locally or that the faculty should make more effort to deliver them. 31% felt that the skills were not relevant to the course or that they were already adequately provided.

The relative importance of the skills that academics thought would progress their students' careers are shown below. This is slightly different to the expectations of businesses, with creative skills rated most highly but is similar enough to allow students/graduates to progress their careers if these skills are delivered in a manner that equates to business expectation.

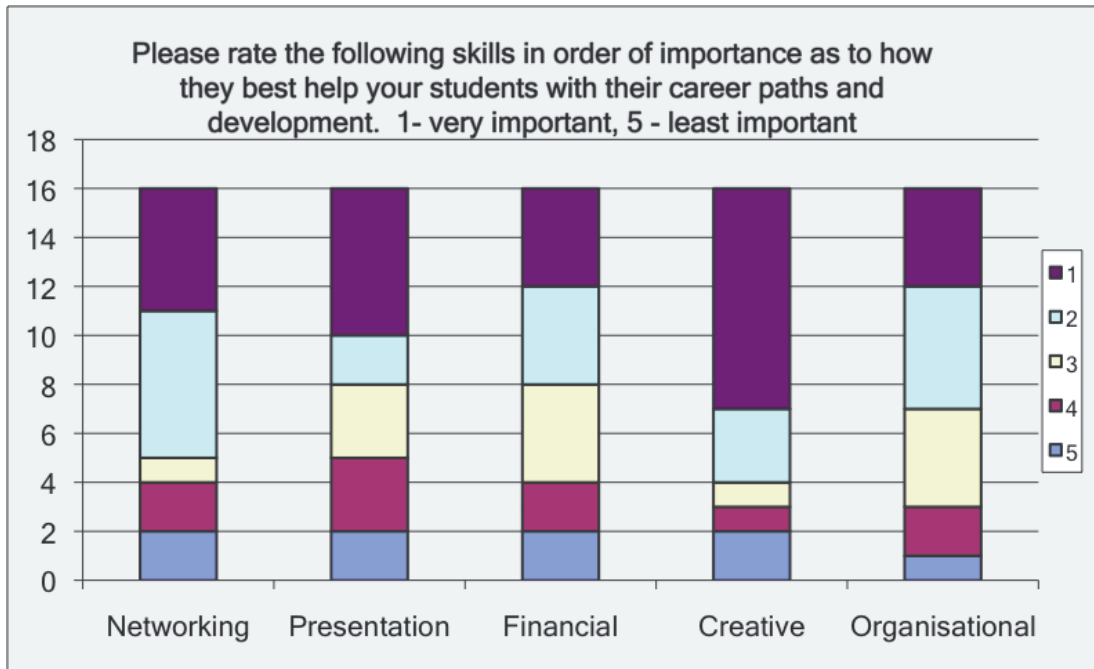


Fig 21. Importance of Skills – Academics

Our survey of creative industries employers showed that their expressed needs emphasised the requirement for their graduates to have creative skills, however willingness to learn, ability to take initiative and organisational skills were also seen as important. Both student and graduate entrants and non-entrants emphasised their presentation skills, but employers do not appear to rate this as highly. Financial skills were not seen as particularly important either in the context of art and design graduates.

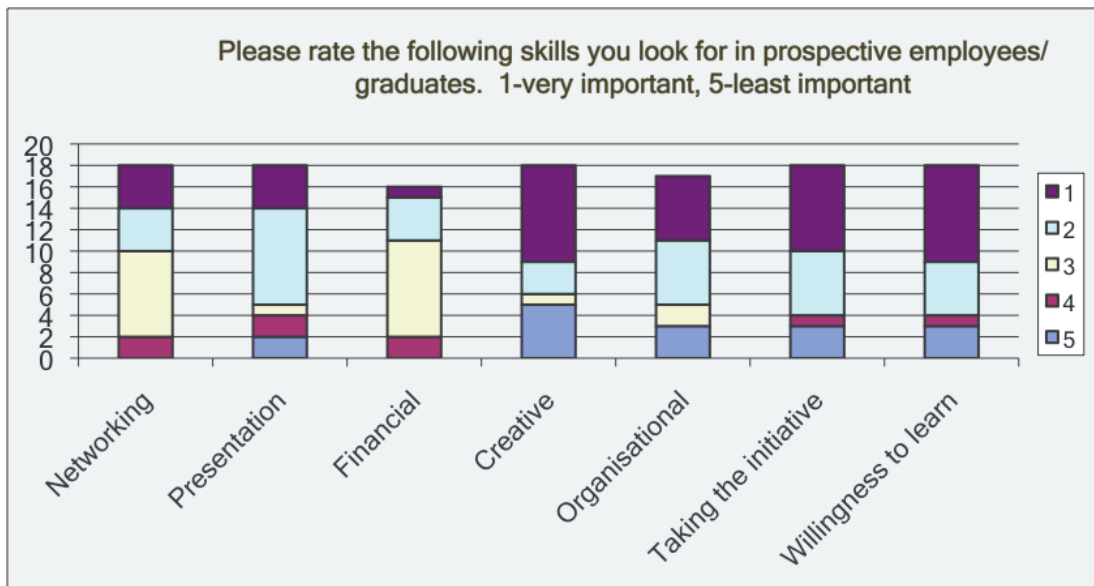


Fig 22. Importance of Skills – Employers

It is worthwhile to point to a broader evidence base in the context of skill requirements. At a general level the CBI/UUK report *Future Fit* (2009) highlight basic employability skills:

- Self-management – readiness to accept responsibility, flexibility, resilience, self-starting, appropriate assertiveness, time management, readiness to improve own performance based on feedback, reflective learning.
- Team working – respecting others, co-operating, negotiating/persuading, contributing to discussions, awareness of interdependence with others.
- Business and customer awareness – understanding the drivers for business success – including the importance of innovation, taking calculated risks, the need to provide customer satisfaction and to build customer loyalty.
- Problem solving – analysing facts and situations, applying creative thinking to develop appropriate solutions.
- Communication and literacy – ability to produce clear, structured written work, oral literacy, including listening and questioning.
- Numeracy – general mathematical awareness and its application in practical contexts, confidence to tackle mathematical problems in the workplace.
- Application of information technology – IT skills including word processing, spreadsheets, file management, and use of internet search engines.

However, it is important to contextualize the apparent discrepancy between employer and industry requirements and university skills provision in the context of the academic requirements of the university provision, which has a broader requirement than the focus on specific skills. Also graduates themselves tend to value university as preparing for life more so than preparing for work. 'They see the purpose of university in much broader terms than employability and return on investment and cite the experience itself and the life skills that are gained through being there as key motivating factors' (Endsleigh report *Class of 2010*, 2010).

The two sector councils Skillset and Creative Cultural Skills (*Strategic Skills Assessment for the Creative Industries*, January 2010) point to specific skills in the creative industries, which is of interest here. The report indicated a range of skill sets to be of importance, especially in view of the changes due to digital environment, including:

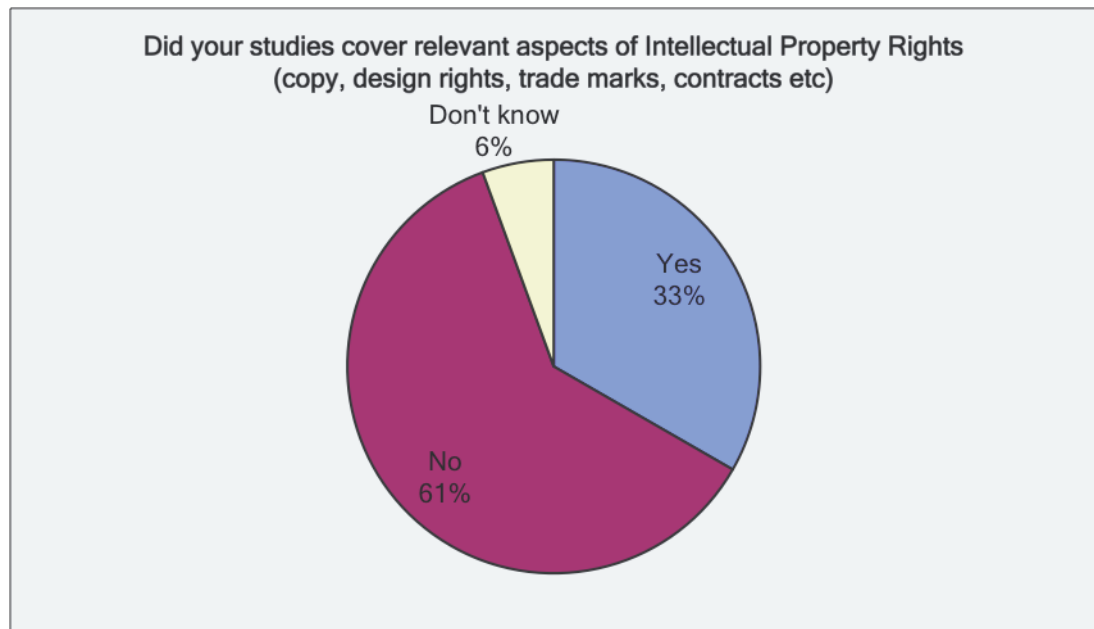
- Multi-skilling: an understanding of different technology and their impact on content development, products and digital work flow, and new approaches to working in cross-functional creative/technical teams within and across companies.
- Multi-platform skills: the creative and technical skills to develop and produce creative content for distribution across all potential platforms, and the ability to understand and exploit technological advances.

- Management, leadership, business and entrepreneurial skills: the hybrid skills combining effective leadership with innovation, creativity and understanding of technology, and the analytical skills to understand audience interests and translate it into business intelligence; and project management for multiplatform development.
- IP and monetisation of content: understanding of intellectual property legislation to protect from piracy, and exploiting intellectual property internationally to take full advantage of emerging markets - with particular focus on the ability to deal with the problem of illegal downloading and copyright infringement.

It is particularly the latter, which relates to understanding and developing strategies to access creative value chains that the students and graduates in our survey had least exposure to.

Of entrants, only one third felt that their studies equipped them to protect their intellectual property.

Fig 23. Importance of Protecting Intellectual Property – Students



3.3.5 Entrepreneurship

According to the ADM-HEA report *Entrepreneurship Education and the Creative Industries* (2007) 'higher education has a crucial role to play in developing ... entrepreneurial capacity, especially given the large number of art, design and media students who hope to pursue their professional practice in their own commercial or social enterprises'. This is echoed in a number of other reports, some of them aforementioned, for example the National Council for Graduate Entrepreneurs (NCGE) report *Developing Entrepreneurial Graduates* (2008), which 'urges universities to institute a systematic overhaul of academic disciplines so that entrepreneurship education is embedded in every subject. We do so in recognition of the fact that graduates need more than academic attainment. To add value, they need to have the entrepreneurial skills that enable them to seize and exploit opportunities, solve issues and problems, generate and communicate ideas, and make a difference in their communities'.

This is echoed in our survey, where 94% of creative industries businesses felt entrepreneurship was important to their business and said:

Fig 24. Importance of Entrepreneurship in Students – Employers

- As I said above, it depends on the position they are going for. For a small company or self started then yes entrepreneurial skills are important but so is the thinking and the creative and the financial. If you're the only one then you have to be king of all. It's hard!
- It is essential to survive in the industry.
- Absolutely vital. Taking your own initiative, working on creativity, having confidence in your own opinion etc are all vital skills for my industry.
- We work in a creative idea focused business that moves very quickly. Spotting new trends and reacting to that with new ideas that support is important.
- We are a service industry that needs to find the hook, the next trend and relay that into someone else's business.
- It's a private sector thing. If you don't complete a client project on time, you cannot invoice, which means you cannot collect the cash which means you do not get paid, which means you cannot pay suppliers which means you cannot complete projects which means you cannot invoice...too many industrial designers cannot get their heads around this and feel the pressure of delivering on time compromises the design.
- Forward looking, strategic thinking... the profession never stands still. Competition is getting harder for people that just 'design'.
- It's important to understand that you need to contribute to the business, in addition to the design work. Profitability and business savvy are about knowledge, but also empowerment to contribute.
- Very much so. We like to think all of our members of staff are entrepreneurial as much of our success is through individual peoples ideas and aspirations.
- It is our ability to make turn ideas into reality that is most valued by clients.
- Creative problem solving.
- This is about initiative and desire to make a difference. It's about trying to make a difference and bring added advantage.

- To help us develop and grow.
- The public sector is a reflection of an organisation with no entrepreneurial skills and look at the mess that is in. Without entrepreneurial skills, Internet businesses would not succeed. Entrepreneurialism brings agility.

Fig 25. Entrepreneurship Skills in Students – Employers

And over 82% of them felt that entrepreneurial skills were in short supply among graduates.

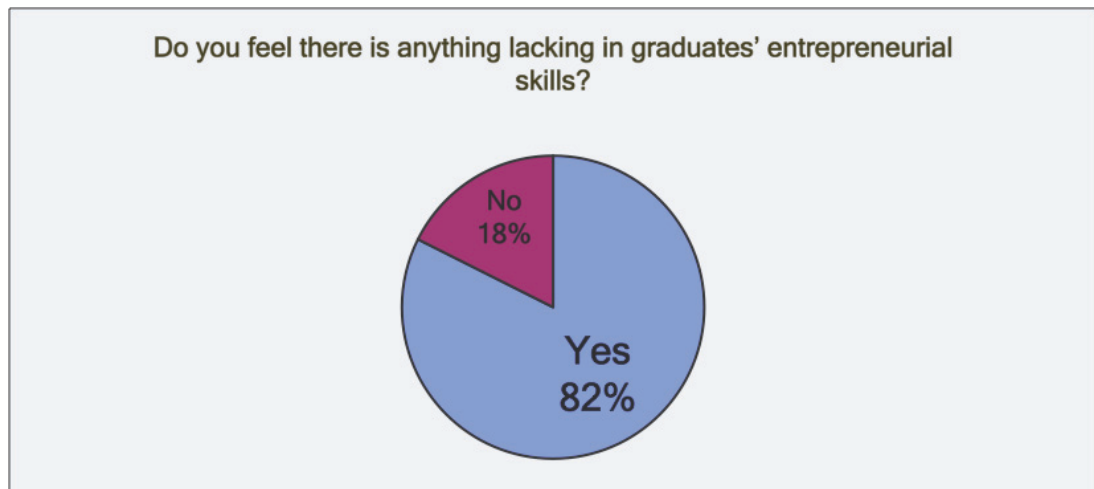


Fig 26. Entrepreneurship Skills in Students – Employers Comments

Regarding any lack of entrepreneurial skills they went on to say:

- Yes and No. Not everyone is entrepreneurial. But this all relates to the position they are going for. For designers it doesn't matter it's their creative I want to see. If they are employed as a new business developer then they need to be entrepreneurial.
- My one experience with a graduate has been split; at one end it is great with the extra hand, but there is a lack of commitment and overall motivation and drive.
- Sometimes they are a bit too 'brainwashed' and don't have the capacity to think for themselves.
- Idea generation can often be overlooked, specifically original design and ideas.
- Communication skills.
Ability to think problems through and to solve these.
- No business skills.
College teaches them that everything takes 3 months.
Needs to be more commercially viable.
- Too much of a 'the world owes me a living' attitude and reliance on technology... I get fed up with receiving

blind cc emails stating 'If you have any jobs will you let me know' as if I'm here for their benefit rather than the other way round.

- Generally speaking I think design courses are focusing more and more on computer skills. So many graduates we see do not understand basics like colour, theory, typography, type setting, design and art theory. This is shame as it shows lack of knowledge of the profession, its history, reference and artistic influence. It's not all bad but I believe this is due to over subscription on all design courses leading to less one-to-one and taught lessons. There are clearly individuals coming out of design courses that should not be on design courses.
- Yes, they do not get to see the real work / business community enough. We recently had a placement student was had just finished her second year into a three year PR degree and in the two years of her course had never met a journalist or tried her hand at copywriting!!!
- Willingness to listen and learn.
Ability to accept responsibility as well as authority.
- Ability to problem solve.
- Lack of understanding about the business aspects to what clients are after when they brief a creative agency. Lack of ability to networking, lack of initiative and entrepreneurial ability, and believe that by doing a degree they are the finished product.
- Experience shows that they come equipped with a piece of paper to show they have passed exams etc, ... and very little else!
- Ability to think small – not everyone is destined to be a manager. Students need to realise you can make more impact being part of a team rather than running a team.

And it is interesting to note that most academics in our survey believe that more entrepreneurial education is required. Academics said:

- Make it more obvious they are there if need be.
- Set up an agency like they have at Westminster.
- Better standard of students on the course. Better marketing of graduate shows. Raise profile and reputation of university and courses. And obviously work experience during the course is very useful.

Fig 27. Entrepreneurship Skills in Students – Academic Comments

- Offer sound advice from those engaged in the professional world about the professional world, especially where they are academics and practitioners.
- Hard to say from the University, but at Course level I think we do a good job at supporting students through our personal efforts to provide opportunities and also get people in to speak. Graduates should be able to keep using their Ucreative emails after they leave, if we are insisting they use it while here, as this is one of the greatest ways of losing contact with graduates.
- Help, support and encouragement in finding ways to set up their own practices.
- Continue to expand the database of networking and professional contacts; instruct them in business skills across the creative arts (both as entrepreneurs and salaried designers).
- It has become increasingly difficult at course level to get visiting professionals in to talk about their practice. It would be great if each college had a visitor (whose practices varied) once a month where students could attend a lecture and listen to first hand experience. It would also be great to have PR and marketing people in to impart the type of information required to self publicise.
- Overview of business skills/procedures.
- Ensure that the advice is coming from the people who know the subject area.
- I believe that this is already being done, but more assistance in helping to set up partnerships with businesses.

A majority of academics also agreed that entrepreneurial skills teaching should be offered to all students.

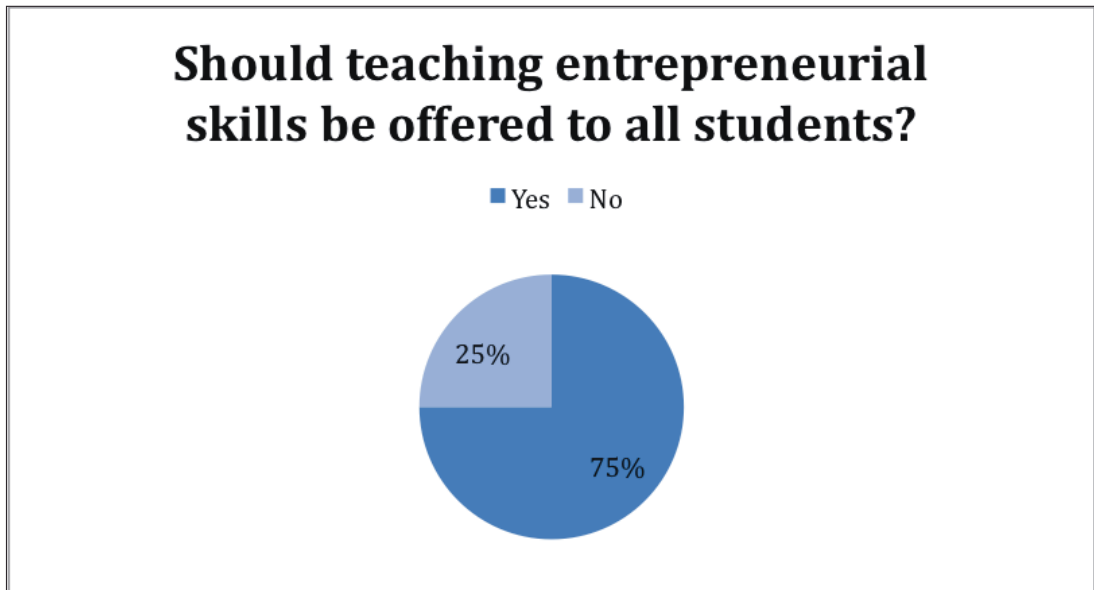
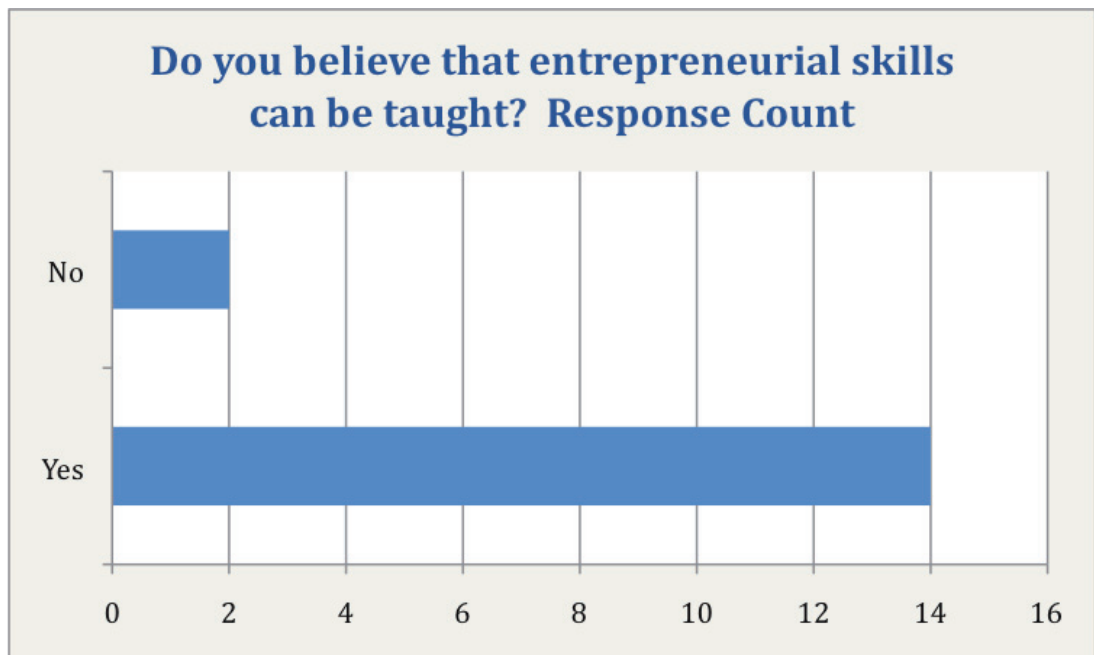


Fig 28. Teaching Entrepreneurial Skills Pt 1 – Academics

There is some debate in academic literature whether entrepreneurship can actually be taught, or whether it is linked to attributes or defies any theory (for a discussion and relation to economics see Klein, P.G. and Bullocks, J.B. *Can Entrepreneurship be taught?* (2006)). There certainly has been a rapid rise in the number of entrepreneurship courses offered in universities and is a multi-billion dollar business world wide (for example see Kuratko, D.F. *The Emergence of Entrepreneurship education: Development, Trends and Challenges*, 2005). And when asked, most academics in our survey believe entrepreneurial skills can be taught and it is of interest as to how this should be approached within the university.

Fig 29. Teaching Entrepreneurial Skills Pt 2 – Academics



The academics' preferred method of entrepreneurial education delivery is shown below:

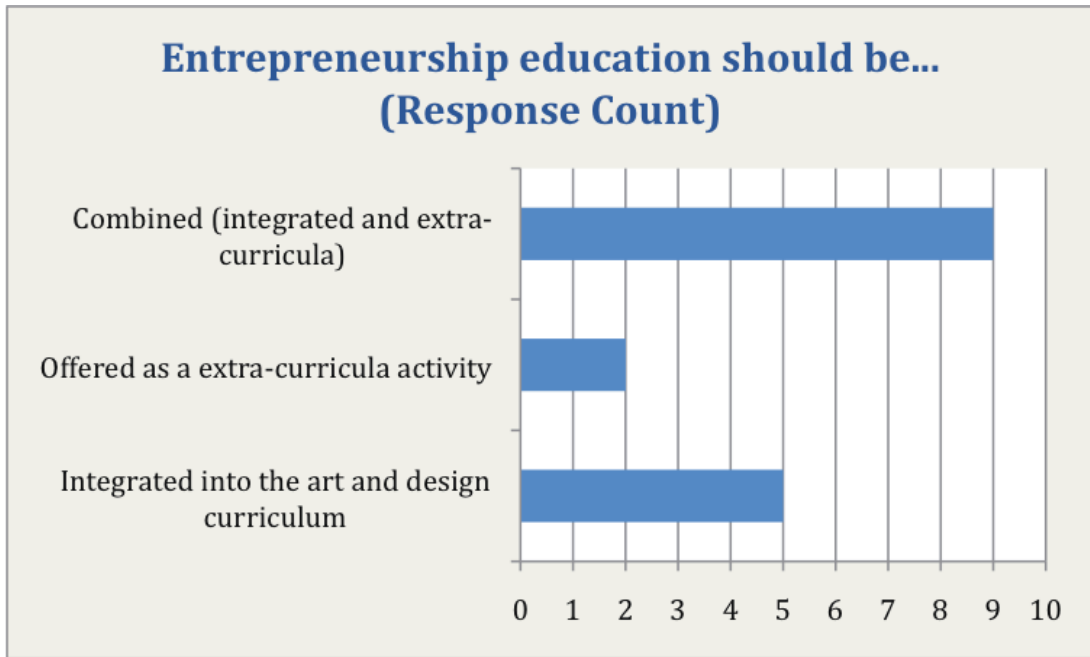


Fig 30. Entrepreneurial Education Delivery – Academics

Indeed the academics feel that there ought to be more central or departmental support to develop and deliver this skill provision.

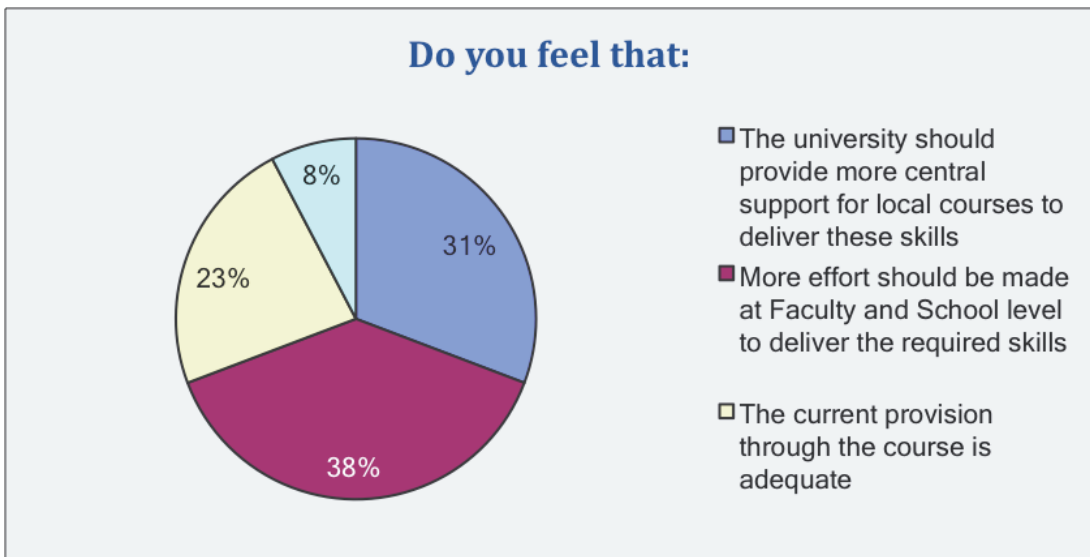


Fig 31. Enterprise education support requirements – Academics

Given the recognised relevance of entrepreneurship in business and academia, it is therefore surprising to find that the Creative Graduates Creative Futures (2010) research found that 'graduates were least satisfied with the development of entrepreneurial skills (with 26 per cent considering that these skills were not at all developed during their course, compared to only seven per cent very well developed)'. However, it is not clear whether graduates recognise entrepreneurial skills as many of the other skills listed above are implicit in these.

Also, the students surveyed who had not entered the enterprise competition almost 20% indicated that they were interested in setting up their own business.

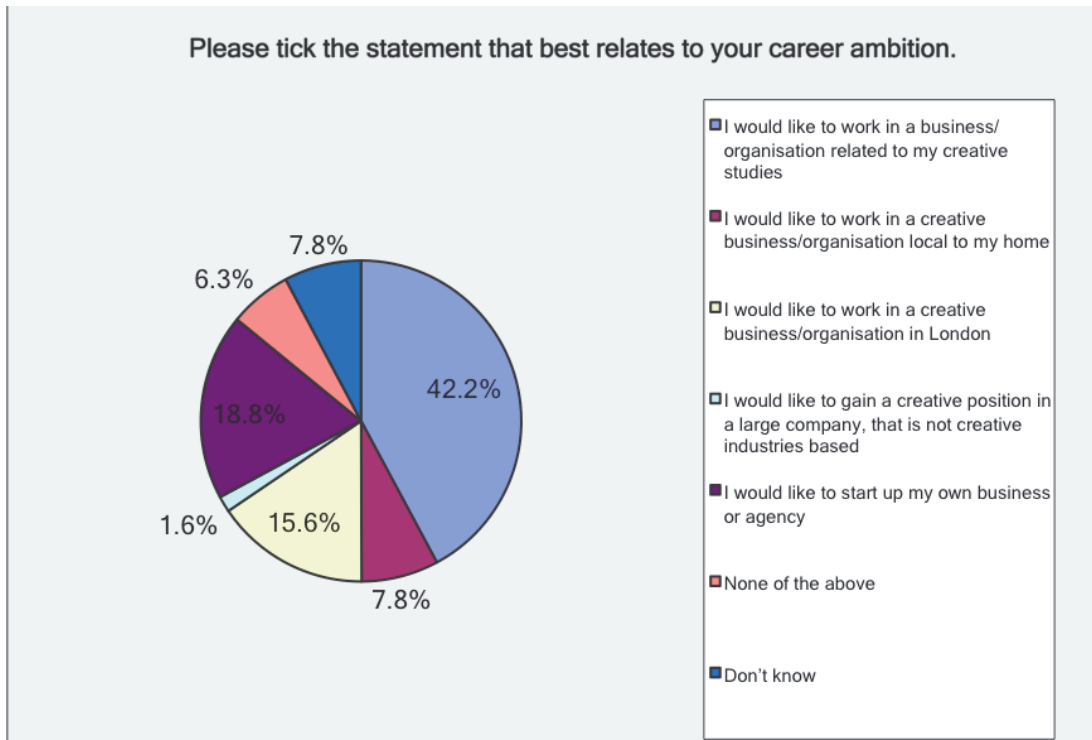


Fig 32. Career Ambition – Students

And for many more, self-employment could be a possible option (although there may not be a choice).

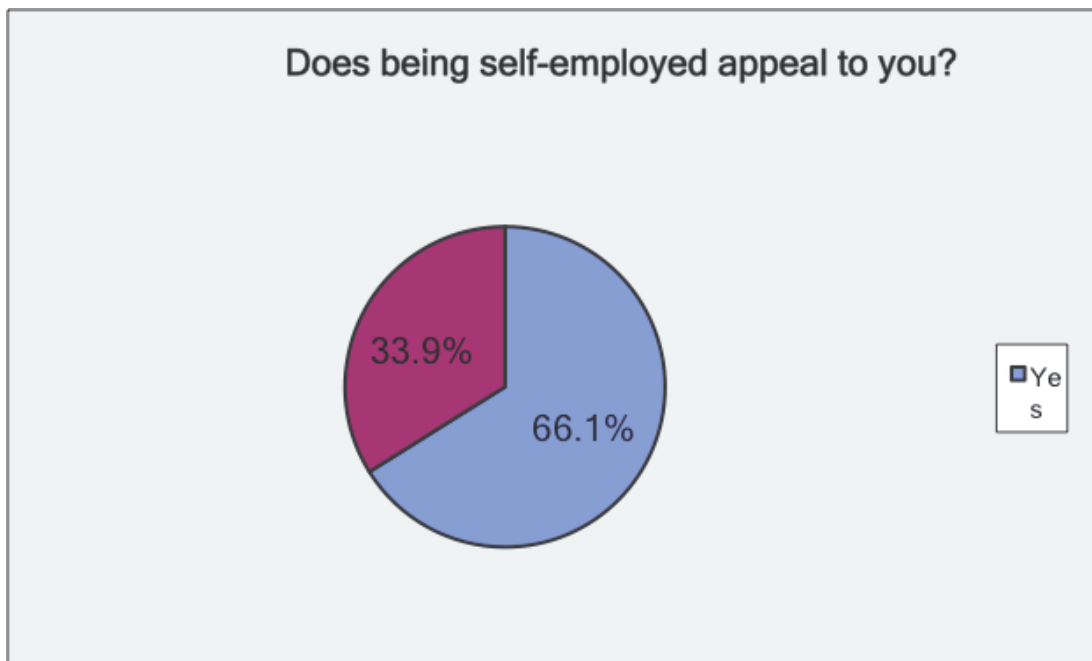


Fig 33. Likelihood of Self-Employment – Students

And yet not many have had an opportunity to formally assess their enterprise skills.

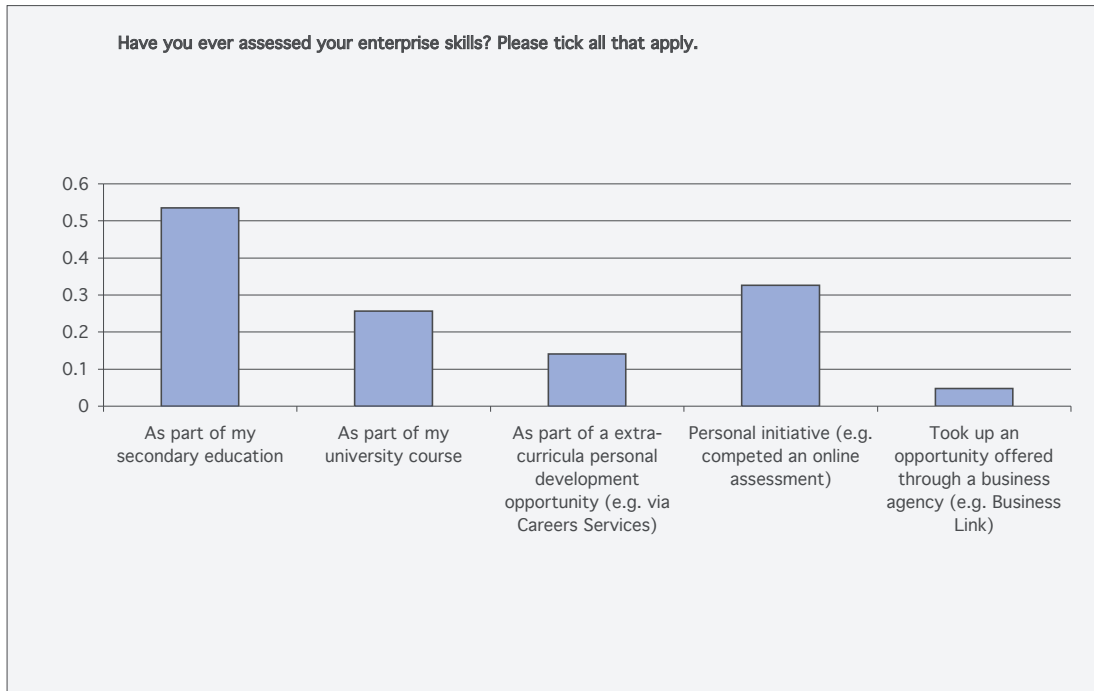


Fig 34. Assessing Enterprise Skills – Students

Unsurprisingly, the Creative Challenge competition did give most students who stuck to it, valuable support in developing their skills and confidence, for example seeking funding for their ideas. But there is also evidence that the competition should have a closer relationship with the academic provision (see also the case studies listed on the Creative Challenge Analysis & Resources website: www.analysis.creativechallenge.info)

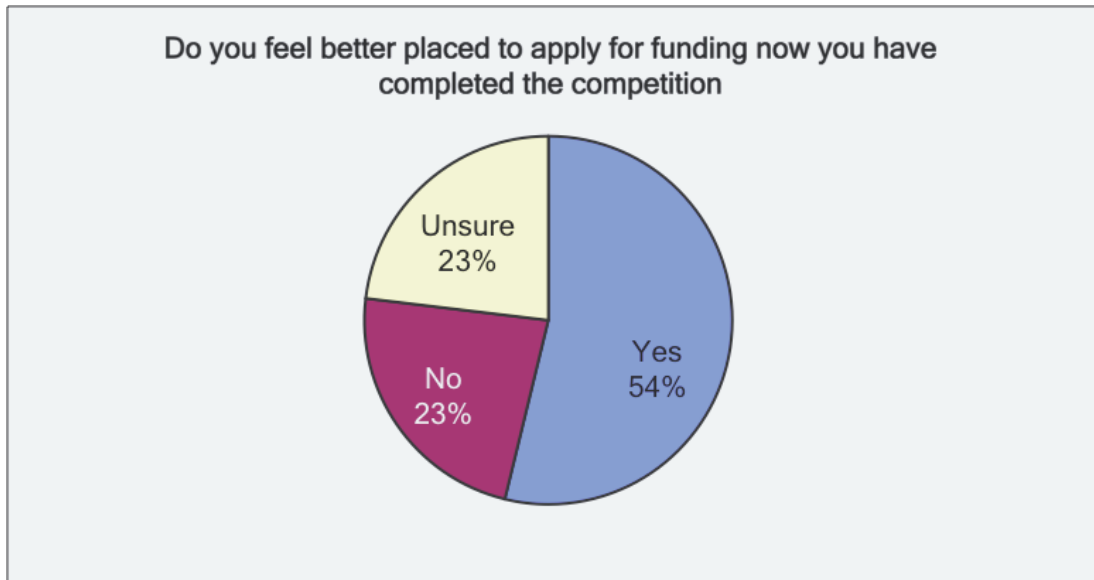


Fig 35. Value of Creative Challenge – Students

Fig 36. Value of Creative Challenge
– Students Comments

Students commented:

- I dropped out because I wanted to concentrate on my final year studies and I found trying to do both too stressful.
- Found it a very rewarding experience because it was one of the only university based things that had greater substance than making something look nice. Most of the work undertaken over the three year course had no real world relevance, the competition made me consider each step in respect to how it would be viewed by the consumer and financial backers rather than doing what was needed to achieve the best mark.
- My grade for UCA would be 8/10.
- I found it very useful as I received a lot of information about presenting and Intellectual Property, etc, that I wouldn't have learnt in university otherwise.
- I found the whole experience extremely rewarding and gained a lot from it, one of the highlights of the year.
- I did not get any support from my tutors.
- It is challenging to help you think about innovative ideas. I look at as a process that assesses the individual's formal and non-formal level of knowledge, in order to determine the extent to which that individual has achieved the required learning and competency to complete a qualification.
- Gave me a chance to put forth my ideas and make myself known by contribution.
- I thought the competition was well organised, though I think more students should be encouraged to compete, maybe including some graduates might rise the bar for all entries.
- Taking part in the competition helped me build my confidence in my studies on my degree.
- Not very rewarding.
- I gained skills and understood the process.
- Very rewarding, though each stage we had to up our game to beat the competition, which is a naturally healthy environment for any business and creatives. So progressing through each stage was a reward in itself besides being. Highly recommended.

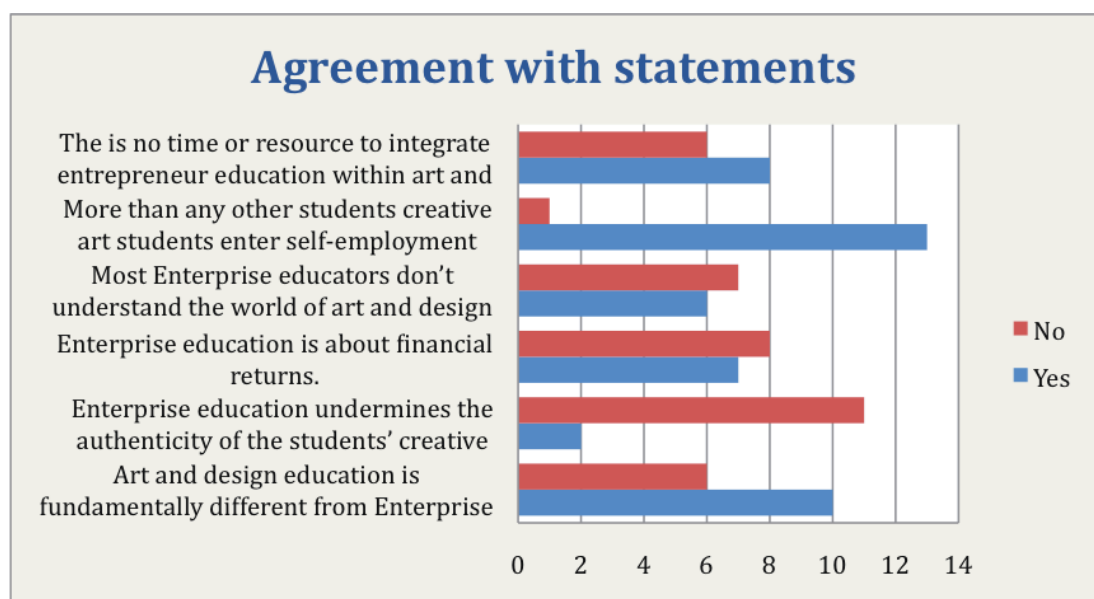
- The competition allowed me to take my ideas further in a positive way. The competition added needed pressure to my design approach offering support in many different ways. I can honestly say that I gained confidence, experience and contacts through taking part.

3.3.6 Art and design education and entrepreneurship education

Again research into entrepreneurship in the art and design disciplines reveal an educational and philosophical tension between the two yet also complementarities in approach. Both value a constructivist approach to learning, learning by doing is important. However, authenticity and integrity are important aspects in art and design education and most art goes beyond the pragmatic, exemplified in the slogan 'art for art sake' referring to its intrinsic value. Within art and design education this standpoint is of course in itself critically debated but it does point to the issue of entrepreneurship education having yet to achieve a certain level of philosophical and academic credibility (see the various debates in West III, P. G.; Gatewood, E.J.; Shaver, K.G. (eds) *Handbook for University-wide Entrepreneurship Education*, 2009).

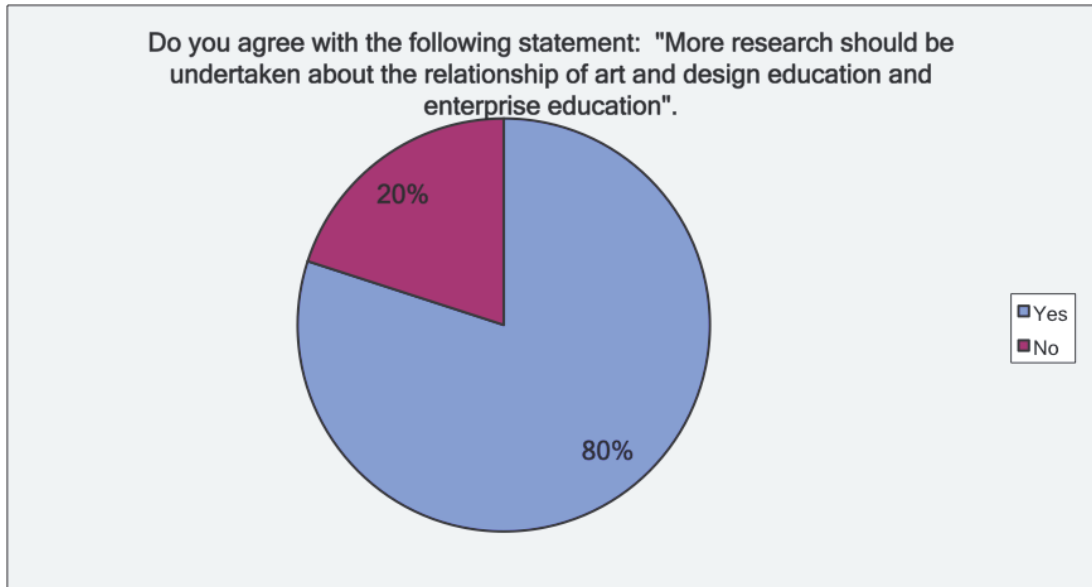
Academics were asked to agree or disagree with a series of statements, which provides an overview of their attitudes to entrepreneurial education and its relationship with art and design education. It identifies that academics tend to doubt that entrepreneurship educators understand art and design and is fairly sure that art and design education is fundamentally different from entrepreneurial education. Entrepreneurship education is associated with finance. This raises concern given that they recognise that many graduates (over 40%) will experience some self-employment (see *Creative Graduates Creative Futures* (2010)).

Fig 37. Attitude to Entrepreneurial Education – Academics



However, it is recognised by the academic community that more research into entrepreneurship education should be undertaken in relation to another academic discipline, here art and design education, '... that "entrepreneurship as distinct domain" and "entrepreneurships in the disciplines" are, in fact, mutually dependent strategies for the development of the field', Davidson, P. *The Entrepreneurship Research Challenge*, 2008, p.15.

Fig 38. Entrepreneurship Education Research – Academics



4.0 Conclusions

- There has been a relatively long tradition of art and design education working with industry, which has subsequently become embedded within the wider higher education agenda of engaging with business and the wider community.
- It is evident that art and design education produces entrepreneurial and resourceful graduates.
- Many experience self-employment after graduation and some actively consider to set-up their own business.
- Industry sets high expectations of graduates having relevant employability skills and expect universities to address the issue of entrepreneurship.
- Academics too, recognise the relevance of entrepreneurial skills, although there is some discrepancy between the emphasis of some specific skill sets.
- However, it is also evident that students and employers feel that more needs to be done and strategies to be found to embrace entrepreneurial skills more systematically.
- More exposure to quality business engagement is called for and businesses appear to welcome this.
- In the case of UCA, students need more opportunities to engage with business locally as relatively few appear to do so.
- Enterprise initiatives have a role to play in the development of entrepreneurship provision but need the support of the important tripartite relationship of academics, students and employers.
- Students need more opportunities to assess their entrepreneurship skills and develop a better understanding of the value of their creativity and to manage this process, for example exposure to intellectual property information and guidance.
- The relationship between art and design education and entrepreneurship needs to be researched further and promises to provide fruitful future discussions.



University for the Creative Arts
Canterbury, Epsom, Farnham, Maidstone
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