

# Access to creative higher education remains highly unequal, says new UK report

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A [new report](#) has found that the creative workforce is still dominated by graduates, with access to creative higher education remaining highly unequal.

The All-Party Parliamentary Group (APPG) for Creative Diversity

collaborated with The University of Manchester, King's College London, University of the Arts London and the Creative Industries Policy & Evidence Center (Creative PEC), with support from YouTube and Paul Hamlyn Foundation, in order to understand the effectiveness of pathways to creative higher education (HE).

The research found that the creative workforce is still dominated by graduates, there is huge inequality in gender, ethnicity, and [social class](#) in applications, offers, acceptances and employment outcomes on creative HE courses, and that apprenticeships are not working for the [creative industries](#). The report looks at ways to support equity, diversity and inclusion in creative education, and identifies critical points for intervention to ensure that the UK's creative industries can be inclusive and equitable.

Their research found that HE institutions and government policy interventions currently focus on encouraging underrepresented groups to apply to creative courses, instead of targeting institutional change. The experts advise that a more diverse creative economy will only develop if responsibility shifts back to the government and Higher Education Institutions, and makes key recommendations on how they can achieve this.

The research project used Census 2021, Universities and Colleges Admissions Service (UCAS) and Higher Education Statistics Agency (HESA) data, [statistical analysis](#), roundtables with stakeholders, case studies and a major review of the global literature.

The report outlines a series of targeted recommendations—it calls for the government to embark on a complete revision of creative and cultural education provision (including significant reforms of creative education delivery within primary and [secondary schools](#) as well as local community provision), and for HE institutions to urgently reconsider the

relationship between creative education and access to creative and cultural work. They say that for too long, the focus has been on encouraging people from underrepresented groups to apply without sufficient scrutiny of the barriers to entry.

"Our University is delighted to be part of the Creative Diversity APPG's new research on creative education," said Professor Fiona Devine, Vice-President and Dean of the Faculty of Humanities at The University of Manchester.

"Alongside our research on the subject, we are currently pioneering new approaches to creative education, including new BA and MA programs in Creative and Cultural Industries and Digital Media, Culture and Society. As a result, the APPG's work is important for Manchester's approach to widening participation in creative education."

"By setting out 'what works' to support a more equitable, diverse, and inclusive creative education system, the report and its policy recommendations offer an important challenge to policymakers, universities, and creative organizations. The challenge of building a more diverse creative education system is one Manchester is proud to be meeting."

"This APPG report's findings illuminate not just the challenges but also the opportunities that lie ahead. The underrepresentation of individuals from global majority backgrounds, the clear class crisis, and gender disparities highlight an urgent call to action," said Chi Onwurah MP, Co-Chair of the APPG for Creative Diversity.

"This report critically sets out 'What Works' to begin building a more equitable creative [education](#) system for those aged 16+ and to dismantling the obstacles facing the next generation of creative talent. If we are to remain a creative nation, systemic change is not just necessary

but absolutely vital," says Professor Fiona Devine.

**More information:** Making the Creative Majority.  
[www.kcl.ac.uk/cultural/resource ... full-report-2023.pdf](http://www.kcl.ac.uk/cultural/resource...full-report-2023.pdf)

Provided by University of Manchester

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