

# THRIVE YOUTH CONFERENCE



# Creative Careers – national context

The UK has one of the most diverse and vibrant creative landscapes with a wide range of career opportunities and pathways – but there are a number of misconceptions about what a ‘creative career’ entails.

The career possibilities and opportunities for young people are significant, with industries seeking highly-qualified and skilled designers, artists, animators, filmmakers, architects, creative coders and more.

However, young people from a privileged background with a degree-level qualification are more than 6.5 times more likely to land a creative job than those from a working-class background only qualified to GCSE-level.\* In addition, creative occupations such as Architects; Journalists and Editors; Musicians; Artists; Producers and Directors are, in fact, as dominated by the privileged as Doctors; Dentists; Lawyers and Judges. They are even more elite than Management Consultants and Stockbrokers.\*\*



Sector Facts and Stats\*

## 1/3

of the creative workforce is freelance compared to 16% across the UK generally



## 1 in 8

businesses are part of the Creative Industries



## £116 billion

contributed to the UK economy every year by Creative Industries



## 72%

of the creative workforce hold a degree compared with 45% for the whole economy



\* National Statistics on the Creative Industries - Creative Industries Policy & Evidence Centre, June 2022

\*\* Social mobility in the Creative Economy Rebuilding and levelling up? - Creative Industries Policy & Evidence Centre, September 2021



# Outreach at UCA



**The University for the Creative Arts (UCA) has a long history of working to raise the aspirations and attainment of young people in Kent and Medway who may not consider progression to Higher Education (HE) as a route to success. Our aim is to promote social mobility by improving access to HE for young people from under-represented backgrounds.**

- As the creative specialist in the region, we've developed a range of inspirational outreach activities to:
- Help raise the profile of creative subjects and dispel myths about working in the creative sector
- Provide students with additional cultural and social capital opportunities
- Give students the opportunity to develop and learn new skills to support their progression
- Allow everyone to find out more about creative careers and how HE can be a pathway into this exciting sector.





# Thrive: Creative Careers Conferences



Thrive Youth Conferences are fun and interactive annual outreach events which:

- Highlight the range of creative careers available
- Enable young people to find out more about the vast range of sectors that rely on creative subjects to thrive
- Focus on enabling and realising aspirations
- And give young people the opportunity to find out more about university and make informed decisions about their future.



In 2022, over 200 students attended a conference across two consecutive days at UCA's Canterbury campus on 20th and 21st April.

Students took part in a carousel of activities including:

- Networking sessions with creative businesses and practitioners
- Creative enterprise workshops
- Transferable skills workshops, with a focus on communication, confidence and team-building
- Sampling different creative disciplines
- Portfolio workshops
- Inspirational talks
- Competitions.



Students were engaged in activities for approximately 4 hours.

The conferences addressed the following outcomes as part of the KMPF Uni Connect 2021-2022 theory of change, supporting:

- Transferable skills, self-awareness, motivation and self-confidence (OC4)
- Preparedness to transition and succeed and higher education (OC2)
- Ability to consider higher education as a realistic option for themselves (OC6)
- Academic skills (OC5)
- Equipped to make informed choices about their post-18 education (OC1)

A further conference is due to be delivered at UCA Canterbury on 6th January 2023.

The conferences also supported schools in contributing to the following Gatsby benchmarks:

- G2** Learning from career and labour market information
- G4** Linking curriculum learning to careers
- G5** Encounters with employers and employees
- G7** Encounters with further and higher education



# Evaluation

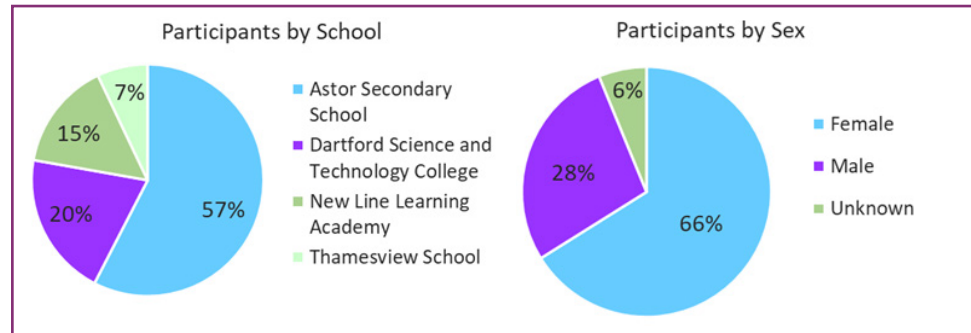
## Participants with matched pre- and post- surveys

176 participants filled in both a baseline survey and a follow-up survey. 57% (n=101) of these were from Astor Secondary School, 20% (n=36) Dartford Science and Technology College, 15% (n=26) New Line Learning Academy and 7% (n=13) Thamesview School. 66% of the participants were female and 28% male (4% said N/A or 'prefer not to say', and 3% gave no answer). Figure 1 shows the percentages of participants by school and by sex.

All participants from Astor Secondary School were in year 9. Participants from the other three schools were in year 10.

There were a further 11 participants in Year 12 (Astor Secondary School) who completed a baseline survey but only partially completed the follow-up survey so these could not be used in the analysis.

Figure 1. Breakdown of participants by school and sex.



# 48%

of participants said their parents/carers **had not** studied at university/HE

# 30%

of participants said their parents/carers **had** studied at university/HE

15% didn't know. The remaining 7% gave no answer.



At the beginning and end of the Thrive event, participants were asked to complete a survey which asked them to rate their agreement on a number of statements in several areas relating to expected outcomes, as follows:-

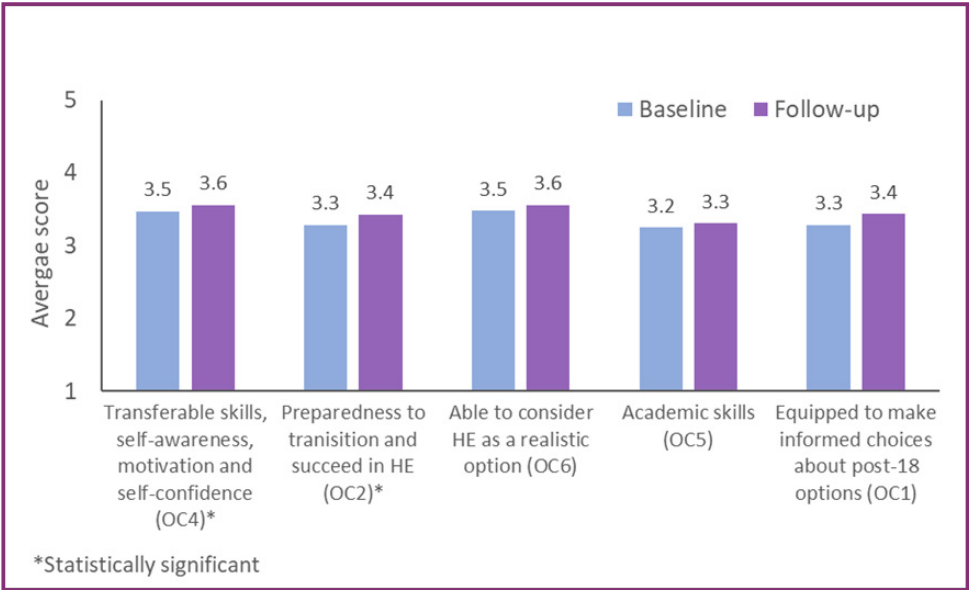
- Transferable skills, self-awareness, motivation and self-confidence (OC4)
- Preparedness to transition and succeed and higher education (OC2)
- Ability to consider higher education as a realistic option for themselves (OC6)
- Academic skills (OC5)
- Equipped to make informed choices about their post-18 education (OC1)



## Baseline v. Follow-Up Outcomes

Analysis was carried out to test for a change in scores for each section. The average scores at baseline and follow-up for each section are shown in Figure 2. There were very small increases in average scores across all outcomes, but only those for ‘transferable skills, self-awareness, motivation and self-confidence’ and ‘preparedness to transition and succeed in higher education’ reached statistical significance.\*\*\*

Figure 2. Average scores at baseline and follow-up for each outcome measure.

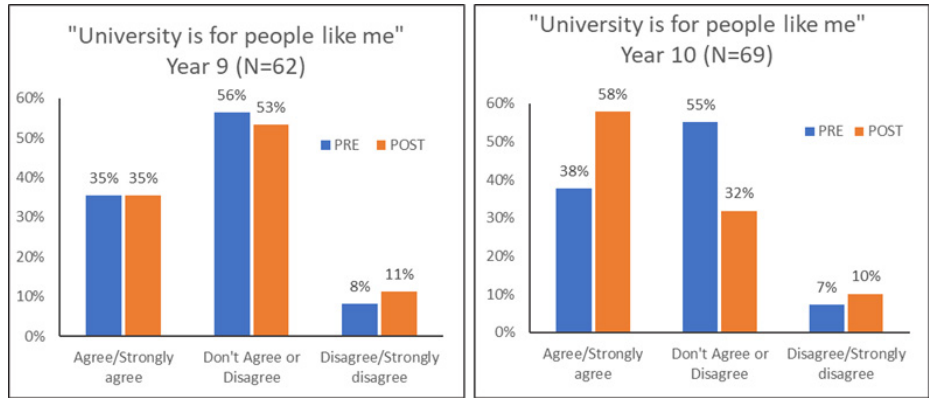


The extent to which students feel that university is for people like them is a further measure of how well students are able to consider HE as a realistic option for themselves (OC6). Participants were asked how much they agree with the statement “University is for people like me”. The responses were split by year group to control for any influence of educational stage.

\*\*\* While it’s an interesting exercise to test for statistical significance one could question how meaningful this is given the very small changes. It’s also worth noting that statistical significance is partly dependant on the number of responses. The ones that reached statistical significance had a similar change as the rest, but a higher number of respondents - it might be that the other scores would have reached significance as well if there were a few more matched responses.

As shown in Figure 3, there was little change in the proportions of year 9 students saying they agree, don’t know, and disagree with the statement. However, among year 10 students, there was a notable decrease in the percentage of those who said ‘don’t know’ and a 20 percentage point increase in the percentage that agreed that university is for people like them at follow-up. There was a small increase in ‘disagree’ responses of 3 percentage points. This finding suggests that taking part in the Thrive event may have influenced year 10 participants’ perceptions of university such that most were able to see it as a more realistic option for themselves.

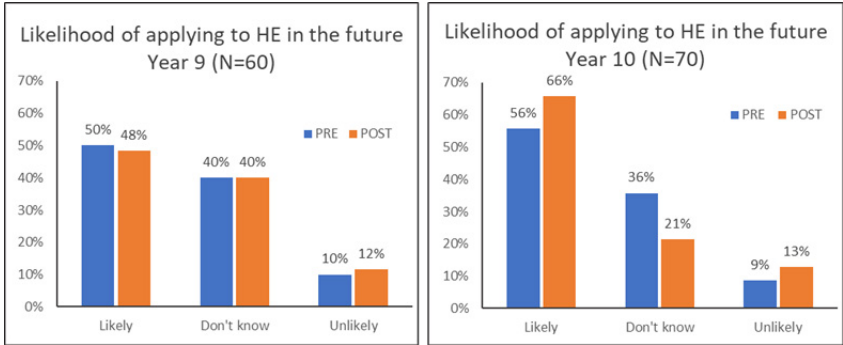
Figure 3. “University is for people like me” by year group.



These changes corresponded, at least partly, with changes in likelihood of applying to higher education in the future (Figure 4). Responses were grouped as ‘likely’ (definitely will, very likely and fairly likely), ‘don’t know’ and ‘unlikely’ (definitely won’t, very unlikely and fairly unlikely). There was little change in year 9’s responses compared to baseline, whereas among year 10 students there was a reduction in the percentage of students who didn’t know if they would apply at baseline with a 10 percentage point increase in the percentage who said they were likely to apply at follow-up (an additional 7 students). There was a 4 percentage point increase in ‘unlikely’ responses (an additional 3 students).

*This suggests that, for year 10 students, the Thrive event may have helped with their decisions around applying to higher education in the future.*

Figure 4. Likelihood of applying to higher education in the future by year group.



Follow-up survey only

This section comprises survey questions that were only asked in the follow-up survey. These were around increased academic skills (OC5) and being better equipped to make informed choices post-18 (OC1).

All participants who completed at least part of a follow-up survey are included (N=194). This includes 11 in year 12, 75 in year 10, and 108 in year 9. Participants did not necessarily answer all questions, so the respondent numbers vary by question.

Figure 5 shows responses to the follow-up questions around increased academic skills following the event, including motivations for taking part.

*The highest positive score was for “I found it useful meeting and speaking to a current university student” with 62% in agreement.*

Gaining an Arts Award was a motivator for taking part for around one third of participants.

Figure 5. Responses around increased academic skills.

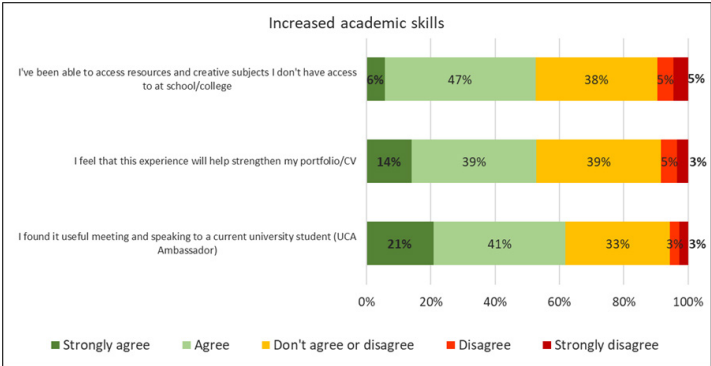
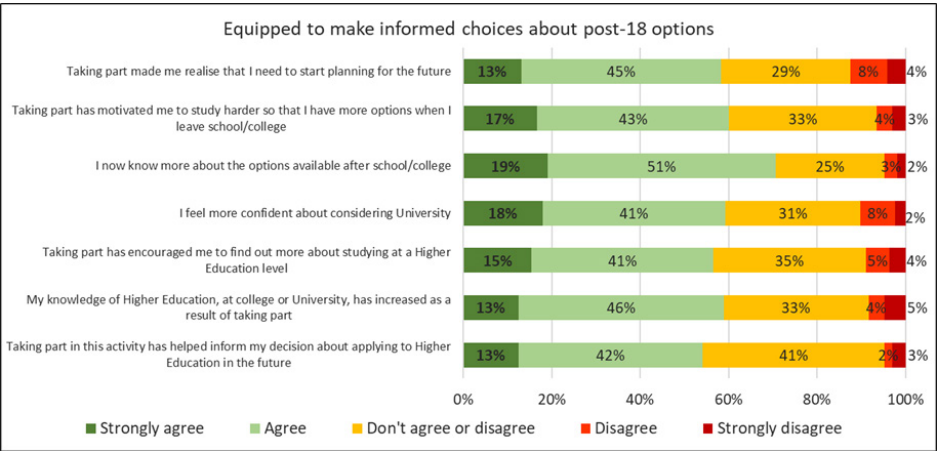


Figure 6 shows the responses to questions corresponding to the outcome around students being better equipped to make informed choices about their post-18 options (OC1), as a result of taking part in the Thrive event. A minimum of 55% of participants either agreed or strongly agreed with each statement in this section.

*The highest percentage of positive response was for “I now know more about the options available after school/college”, with 70% agreement.*

Figure 6. Responses around being better equipped to make informed choices.



Arts Award Questions

Astor Secondary School students took part in an Arts Award during the event (n=82). All students were in year 9.

As the introductory level in the nationally recognised suite of Arts Award qualifications, Discover is designed to develop knowledge and understanding of the arts and boost creativity, curiosity, confidence and communication skills.

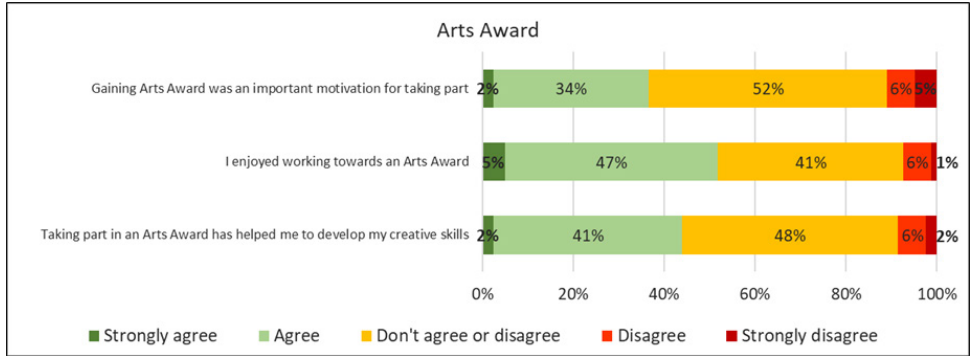
Students were informed that they would be taking part in Arts Award activities a few days before the event took place.

*Interestingly, just over a third of these students said that gaining Arts Award was an important motivation to taking part.*



Figure 7 shows the responses to the three questions around the Arts Award.

Figure 7. Responses to the Arts Award questions.



Staff Feedback Survey

Ten staff members provided feedback.

Staff were asked how confident they feel about advising students about careers in the creative industries before and after the event. The responses are shown in Table 1.

Table 1. “How confident did/do you feel about advising students about careers in the creative industries?”

	Before	After
Unconfident	3	0
Confident	3	5
Very Confident	4	5

*“The most beneficial aspects of the event for students were networking and finding out about the variety of careers available to them.”*

*“The Thrive Youth Conference was an engaging and exciting day for our students. I strongly recommend it.”*

*“The students found the networking aspect valuable.”*

*“Great insight into creative careers.”*





