



Duncan of Jordanstone College of Art & Design
University of Dundee
Matthew Building
13 Perth Road
Dundee DD1 4HT
United Kingdom

Rt Hon Michelle Donelan MP
Minister of State for Universities,
Department of Education Sanctuary Buildings,
Great Smith St, London, SW1P 3BT

Rt Hon Amanda Solloway MP
Minister for Science, Research and Innovation,
Department for Business Energy & Industrial Strategy
1 Victoria Street, London SW1H 0ET

27th May 2020

Dear Secretary of State for Universities and Secretary of State for Science, Research and Innovation,

We, the Council for Higher Education in Art and Design (CHEAD), call on the Government to engage with leaders in creative higher education and to support the educators, students and graduates who make a vital contribution to the global success of the UK's creative and cultural industries.

CHEAD represents the collective voice of 66 Higher Education Institutions that deliver art and design programmes. We encourage you to consider the contribution that our sector makes to the economic, societal and cultural health of the nation and to appreciate the major contribution that the research and innovation of the art and design higher education sector will continue to make as we emerge from the crisis that the COVID-19 pandemic has generated. We would like to work with you, as a key contributor, to help form solutions for the recovery and wellbeing of the UK as a whole.

The creative industries are one of the UK's major success stories, growing at five times the rate of the wider UK economy prior to the pandemic, and contributing £111.7bn to the UK economy in 2018, an increase of 43.2% in real terms since 2010. The Cultural Sector contributed a further £32.3bn to the UK economy in 2018, an increase of 21.9% in real terms since 2010. From this position of great strength, the creative and cultural sectors must surely provide a key strategic pillar to drive the economic recovery of the UK, and to transform our lives for the better as we rebuild.

The success of the UK creative and cultural industries would not have been achieved without the talent pipeline generated through the educational provision of art and design schools, faculties, and universities. Through our dynamic industry and public engagement, we are highly connected with the vision and demands for future skills requirements, research and innovation trends, and employment. Close working and collaboration with industry and cultural partners underpins art and design higher education. Our collaborations with the science, engineering, social and health care disciplines and professions has been foregrounded during the pandemic, as art and design educators across the country have prototyped new technology, designed systems solutions, and worked with local manufacturers to help meet the urgent demand for Personal Protective Equipment (PPE), in projects such as the Scrub Hub devised by NHS Tayside, Halley Stevenson, and University of Dundee.

We firmly believe that Art and Design Higher Education is essential to economic and societal recovery, with our programmes acting as vital incubators for the current and next generations of artists, designers, makers and thinkers who will play a significant role in producing dynamic new ways of thinking, devising new ways of working and living, and enabling a revitalised understanding of identity, culture and place, regionally, nationally and internationally. We believe that the creative disciplines and industries are critical to restoring and rebuilding the civic and social fabric of the UK.

Before COVID-19, our world leading higher education provision was fuelling the economy. Art, media, and design degree programmes were receiving 9.11% of total applications to Higher Education in the UK. The creative subjects were the fourth most desirable choice of study for home and overseas students and, in 2018/19, the top subject choice amongst students aged 20 and under was Creative Arts & Design. These degree programmes foster the skillsets, and support the demand for 1.2 million new workers, that the digital and creative industries were expected to need between 2012 and 2022.

The UK's creative and cultural sector has been severely impacted by COVID-19 and will need strategic support and investment to bounce back. We must not allow the UK to lose momentum from its creative businesses, to suppress demand and productivity, or to curtail the student ambition and talent that flows from our universities into this vibrant sector. Correspondingly, universities are being impacted by COVID-19 and the renewed mission of CHEAD is to provide resilience for our subject area, to mitigate these destabilising effects, and to reduce the longer-term impact and consequences there will be on the wider creative economy if there is disruption to provision, reduced resources, or a reduction of courses as an outcome of the pandemic.

We call on the Government to consult more widely on policy interventions affecting the UK higher education in art, design, and the wider creative subjects; to implement a more inclusive frame of reference for the value of creative subjects alongside STEM; and to recognise the current and historic contribution of art and design higher education in reconstructing societies, economies, and communities, as the UK is further impacted in the aftermath of this devastating pandemic.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Anita Taylor', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Professor Anita Taylor
Chair, Council for Higher Education in Art and Design (CHEAD)
Dean, Duncan of Jordanstone College of Art and Design, University of Dundee
Email: ATaylor002@dundee.ac.uk

Sandra Booth
Director of Policy and External Relations, CHEAD
Email: Sandra@thead.ac.uk