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Research and evaluation specialists

Creative Pathways

Evaluation

August 2022

Creative Pathways: Evaluation

For



Supported by





Year 3 Creative Pathways Graduate Interns

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We would like to thank the following for giving their time to meet with us and providing their views to inform this study. This includes 19 of the 21 graduate interns we were able to interview.

Creative Pathways project partners and wider stakeholders

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University of Nottingham	Rachel Feneley, Learning Officer, Lakeside Arts
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Nonsuch Studios	Edward Boott, Artistic Director and Chief Executive Officer
Dance 4	Emma Hayes, Executive Director
Nottingham Contemporary	Amanda Spruyt, Head of Learning
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Nottingham City Council	Nigel Hawkins, Head of Culture and Libraries
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Careers Research and Advisor Centre	Tristram Hooley

Evaluation of Creative Pathways, for the University of
Nottingham and Partners

Graduate interns

Host organisation

Intern

Lakeside Arts

Lucy Robinson (Year 1)

Emily Bicknell (Year 2)

Alice Walker (Year 3)

City Arts Nottingham

Amelia Coburn (Year 2)

Kate Inglis (Year 3)

Nottingham UNESCO City of Literature

Ruby Tyler (Year 1)

Phoebe Stafford (Year 2)

Eleanor Flowerday (Year 3)

Nottingham Playhouse

Holly Wilson (Year 1)

Adam Collins (Year 2)

Isabel Abdul-Rahim (Year 3)

Nonsuch Studios Studios

Daniel McVey (Year 1)

Gianluca Scatto (Year 2)

Cecilia Alexander (Year 3)

Nottingham Contemporary

Ella Burns-Robbins (Year 1)

Daniella Taiwo (Year 3)

Dance 4

Grace Willams (Year 1)

Emily Tregale (Year 2)

Kate O’Gorman (Year 3)

This report was written by Adam Jeffrey, CEO of Chimera Consulting (October 2022).

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Executive Summary

Executive Summary

Introduction

The University of Nottingham and the creative sector partners involved with Creative Pathways, have delivered a project which has provided many benefits to graduates, to the 7 partners involved, and to Nottingham's creative sector.

We would have no hesitation in recommending a "follow-on" programme be funded to build upon the successes of this model and have outlined some options in **Section 5.2** to consider.

Creative Pathways Programme's aims were to:

- Develop, encourage and retain talented graduates in the creative sector
- Increase the diversity of the workforce within the cultural and creative industries across the Midlands
- Build capacity, develop leadership and nurture future partnerships that will increase local graduate retention.

Involving 7 of Nottingham's creative sector partners (see **Section 1.1**), the programme aimed to provide a solid foundation to graduates as their first significant step onto their respective career ladders, through the provision of paid internships, careers awareness raising events and a supported cohort approach. The opportunity of a supported pathway from the world of academia to the world of work, enabled 21 graduates to benefit from this over a three-year period. A total investment of £469,845, including Office for Students grant support of £293,315 and the balance of £175,630 met by partners (contributing cash and in-kind support), enabled each graduate to experience a 6-month paid internship. Each organisation supported 3 internships over a 3-year period (2019 to 2022).

Our research, through extensive interviews, has shown the programme has provided a high-quality experience for graduates who are now better equipped to develop a career path within the creative sector. We received overwhelmingly positive feedback from them on their experience and the impact the programme has made for them personally, their outlook, their employment prospects and their career opportunities. **Section 3** sets out the research findings based upon their feedback. Creative Pathways included a programme of events, through the Creative Academy programme, providing students with the opportunity to hear from industry experts on a range of relevant topics over the 3-year period. These helped raise awareness of viable career options and pathways, and for students to make direct contact

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with experts in various fields. Topics included journalism, marketing, event management, music, screen industries, podcasting and more.

One of the most innovative features of the programme was the cohort model. The programme had been developed to encourage the seven interns in each year to feel part of a wider team, with pro-active support from the University/Lakeside Arts facilitating regular meetings (fortnightly check-in sessions with Lakeside's Learning Officer and also monthly Learning Network events planned by the Interns with support from Lakeside or other partners where required). This encouraged dialogue between cohorts and with the University, and made it clear there was a support system in place beyond their host organisation. This allowed graduates to share their experiences, learn from one another and gain an understanding of the work across all 7 partner organisations, helping them become more familiar with workplaces and job roles outside of their immediate host organisation.

Graduate interns talked positively about the bonds that developed between each year group and, for some, across year groups. This helped them develop friendships and long term contacts, as well as helping them feel more settled and embedded within Nottingham. The cohort model and its peer learning benefits are central to the success of the scheme, as has been the commitment of the partners to take on interns, to supervise and help them learn, work and develop. The cohort model of engaging with the team of interns as a group and providing ongoing support sets it apart from most other internship type programmes.

Covid-19 restrictions posed challenges for the programme, with Year Two graduate interns having to start their internships in a remote working environment, and most only being able to meet their colleagues in person towards the latter stage of their internship. It also led to Creative Academy events moving to an online format although extra events were delivered.

100% of the interns we consulted had stayed within and/or were planning to follow a career within the creative sector. 63% had stayed within the Nottingham area, showing that the graduate retention impact of the programme has been very positive.

Key benefits for graduates included:

- Finding out what they liked / disliked and clarifying what they would be more interested in or better suited for in terms of next stage jobs; it has helped clarify their career choices
- Enabling them to develop a robust foundation to their CV
- Giving them a competitive edge in the jobs market
- The opportunity to build a network of contacts and the acquisition of some new skills.

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They also reported that they had:

- Gained experience of a “professional workplace” and gained good working habits and workplace behaviours (employability skills) and grown in confidence
- Their eyes opened to the Nottingham arts scene and found it to be friendly, vibrant and one they wanted to stay in for a while
- Gained networks, advice and (for some) confidence to become self-employed
- Made new friends and good work contacts.

For creative sector organisations who were partners to the programme, they benefited in several ways. The additional capacity to meet specific needs, and benefit from typically enthusiastic and young talent bringing new perspectives, skills and ideas. Moreover, the programme helped them:

- Further develop and cement relationships across the partners which should benefit future collaborations
- Deliver a greater level of community engagement and outreach into Nottingham communities, particularly work with young people
- Secure a strong degree of graduate retention in the sector
- Raise the profile of career opportunities in the creative sector for young people and generate greater interest in sector for graduates considering employment opportunities.

The programme aimed to help graduates who might otherwise have faced barriers to securing a position within the creative sector by targeting young people who met at least one of a number of “widening participation” criteria (see **Appendix 2**). In this respect it was successful and several mentioned disabilities in their conversations at application stage, and a number were first in the family to attend university. Although ethnic diversity was acknowledged by partners as needing more work to reach, attract and appoint ethnically diverse candidates as only 10% of graduate interns were not White. The proportion of female interns reflected the high percentage of female candidates who were shortlisted each year. In Year 3 there were 5 shortlisted male candidates representing 25% of the total number interviewed but no male candidates were appointed. In Year 1 there was one male appointment and two appointments in Year 2. This attraction and conversion rate for male candidates may require some attention in developing any follow-on programme.

We would advocate a follow-on scheme, possibly larger in scale and in partnership with Nottingham Trent University. Securing funding for a future programme will be the main challenge faced and we have suggested a number of “next steps” for the Creative Pathways Steering Group members to take as well as options to consider, set out in **Section 5**.

1/ Introduction

1: Introduction

1.1 Creative Pathways – an introduction

Aims

The Creative Pathways programme was a three year scheme funded by the Office for Students (OfS) through its Challenge Funding programme (£293,315) between 2019-2022, to support diversification and graduate retention in the creative industries sector.

Creative Pathways Programme's aims were to:

- Develop, encourage and retain talented graduates in the creative sector
- Increase the diversity of the workforce within the cultural and creative industries across the Midlands
- Build capacity, develop leadership and nurture future partnerships that will increase local graduate retention.

Internships

Led by Lakeside Arts, the University of Nottingham's public arts programme and involving seven creative sector organisations across Nottingham, Creative Pathways had two strands of provision: Internships for University of Nottingham Graduates and Creative Pathways Academy for Undergraduates.

There were seven Internships available annually over a three-year period with each partner organisation acting as host/employer, for one graduate intern each year over a six-month period. This enabled a total of 21 graduates to complete an internship and gain invaluable experience in the creative sector and as a pathway into a longer-term career within the sector. These were paid, full-time positions.

The internships provided practical vocational experience, training and development across a range of arts administration skills including: event planning, organisation and delivery; community engagement and learning programmes; finance and fundraising; budget administration and management; together with an awareness of the importance of marketing, publicity, communications and PR. In addition, insights into key operational areas including Box Office, Front of House, Technical and Production were available across the partnership, depending on the specific host organisation.

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The programme was promoted within the University to undergraduates and each year. Applicants needed to meet at least one of the “widening participation” criteria (see **Appendix 2**) to ensure students from backgrounds underrepresented in Higher Education could fully access opportunities available to all students, and to help improve social mobility. Each year, approximately 40 to 50 students applied, and an anonymised shortlisting process was followed by interviews with programme partners. Endeavours were made to try and match those offered an Internship with the organisation which most closely aligned with their interests.



Year 2 Creative Pathways Graduate Interns

Creative Academy

The Creative Academy element comprised a series of events focusing upon a range of pertinent to the creative sector – bringing in industry experts to raise awareness about the breadth of career options available and related career pathways. The live, in-person sessions also provided an opportunity for networking with peers, industry professionals and interns following each formal event over refreshments. These events provided an opportunity for students to gain awareness of and insights into a wide range of creative industries including: journalism; screen industries; virtual reality; event management; marketing the arts; the games industry; creative technologies; podcasting; the music industry; and a Black Excellence in the Arts: Media, Marketing and Talent Management event.

The original plan had been to host all events in person, but Covid-19 restrictions impacted upon this in 2020, with events moving to an online format.

Partners

City Arts Nottingham: For 40 years, City Arts Nottingham has worked to give everyone full and equal access to creating art. Projects include music, performance, visual and digital arts and are all facilitated by artists who are skilled in working creatively and collaboratively in communities.

Dance4: Dance4 is an international centre for the development of extraordinary 21st century dance. A unique voice in the UK dance sector, their work supports artists and practitioners who are interested in the development of dance.

Lakeside Arts: Lakeside is the University of Nottingham's public arts programme presenting a year-round diverse cultural offer attracting more than 185,000 engagements annually, providing a strong platform for civic engagement and an innovative meeting point for international artists, academics, students and members of the public alike.

Nonsuch Studios: Nonsuch Studios is Nottingham's independent fringe theatre, creative venue & arts charity. Inspired by a belief that creativity is power, empowering cultural freedom by unlocking creativity & celebrating life across creative, community and studios programmes. Nonsuch Studios' artist works tours across the UK and beyond with contemporary physical theatre, amazing sensory and family shows and large-scale outdoor installations.

Nottingham Contemporary: Opened in 2009, the Nottingham Contemporary is an international centre of contemporary art with a strong sense of local purpose. It aims to be build broad and diverse audiences. The Contemporary offers a range of activities: international exhibitions, events for families and young people; free-to-attend talks, films and performances and transformative learning experiences for all ages.

Nottingham Playhouse: Nottingham Playhouse is one of the country's leading producing theatres, making bold and thrilling world-class theatre that is made in Nottingham and is as diverse as the community. Touring work nationally and internationally, the Playhouse remains firmly rooted in its vibrant home city and with a history dating back to 1948. It was awarded "Regional Theatre of the Year" by The Stage (2019).

Nottingham UNESCO City of Literature: Nottingham was awarded UNESCO City of Literature status in December 2015 and now takes its place as a member of the UNESCO Creative Cities network, enabling it to play a cultural and creative role on the global stage. As an educational charity, it is committed to building a better world with words through events and education projects, creating new opportunities to engage more people with the benefits of reading and writing, and establishing Nottingham as a leading destination for lovers of literature worldwide.

1.2 Study objectives

Scope of the brief

The scope of the brief, as issued, stated:

“To undertake an independent evaluation of the effectiveness of the project and provide a report which can be shared with The Steering Group, the University and OfS (Office for Students).”

In so doing to:

- Review original concept and delivery against milestones and targets supplied to OfS in original application to include figures relating to programme delivery across the Internships and Creative Academy
- Identify any key learning which could be shared more widely with other OfS projects or future programmes delivered by University of Nottingham, eg Learning Agreements, Learning Networks/Empowerment and support
- Consider/recommend potential benefits of sustaining links with the 21 Interns in order to benefit future generations of students at University of Nottingham
- Identify success stories: the power & importance of partnership working across UoN and externally – the role of the Steering Group
- Identify elements that didn't happen as originally anticipated and consider why/how this could have been mitigated/avoided
- Note additions/benefits to programme not originally anticipated
- Make recommendations for future schemes including:
 - Scoping possibilities for (a) continuation (b) expansion of programme across Strategic Cultural Partners
 - Diversification of Steering Group
 - Any potential sources of funding.

1.3 Methodology

Our approach to carrying out this research assignment included quantitative and qualitative elements. The former included a review of monitoring reports and data which tracked progress towards achieving targets. The latter included obtaining feedback from those involved in the project at strategic and implementation levels, offering the opportunity to all interns to be consulted; it was planned that this would use the majority of research time. We developed lines of enquiry for interviews and these are reflected within **Section 3** of this report.

Some key dates and timeline:

- Interviewed 18 March
- Inception Meeting (online) 5 April
- 2022 Graduation Event 6 April
- Steering Group – initial discussion 27 April
- Consultations – set up May
- Consultations – delivery 6 June to 5 August
- Steering Group attendance 28 July
- Steering Group – initial presentation 7 September

Regarding interviewing interns, we offered a number of date and time options to meet in person using Nottingham Playhouse, Nottingham Contemporary and Lakeside as venues, as these would be familiar to them and would provide a relaxed environment in which to meet.

These were supplemented by video-calls (Zoom) targeting those who no longer lived in the Nottingham area or those whose diary commitments made it challenging to meet in person. We emailed out invitations in May and started getting diary commitments, then followed up with reminders to those from whom we had not received a response. As a result we interviewed 19 of the 21 interns from early June through to early August.

With Steering Group members (programme partners) and other stakeholders, we met in person between June and early August, with only a couple carried out by telephone or videocall.

In total, we carried out a total of 33 separate interviews for this evaluation assignment.

Research also included some desk-based review of programme OfS monitoring returns, graduation event materials and CRAC's review notes, plus the Nottingham Strategic Cultural Partnership Plan.

2/ Quantitative review

2: Quantitative Review

2.1 Targets and achievements

The two main targets the programme set out to achieve were:

- The provision and delivery of 21 Internships, one with each of 7 partners annually over three years
- The showcasing of creative sector career options through 9 Creative Academy events.

The partners successfully achieved these targets aside from one Creative Academy event in the first year (March 2020) due to Covid-19 lockdown restrictions. However, an additional four Creative Focus events were arranged and delivered in an online format. Attendance levels were as follows:

Year	Event	Attendees
2019-2020	Careers in the arts – spotlight on gaming	114
2019-2020	Careers in the arts – spotlight on journalism	90
2020-2021	Marketing the arts	63
2020-2021*	Screen industries	59
2020-2021*	Games industries	60
2021**	Event management	61
2021**	Podcasting	48
2021**	UK Music	16
2021**	Black Excellence in the Arts: Media, Marketing and Talent Management	22
2021-2022	Creative technologies	40
2021-2022	Journalism	62
2021-2022	Screen industries	60

*Denotes delivered online

**Denotes additional “Creative Focus” events provided in an online format.

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Expenditure

The Creative Pathways programme was financed by the Office for Students with a financial award of £293,315. Investment from project partners was projected to be significant too:

Re: Project Partners

1/ Internship support

- In kind contributions relating to staff time for training and support equates to some £3,780 per organisation per annum
- Materials and use of office space, phone and equipment amounts to some £1,250 per organisation per annum
- Combined a total of £5,030 per organisation per annum or £15,090 per organisation in total.

In kind support of **£90,540**. This was an under-estimate of actual in-kind support provided.

2/ Creative Academies through engagement and expertise

- **£8,250** over 3 years contributed by the six partners

Also, cash contributions per partner per year of £500, or £1,500 per organisation (based on 6) = **£9,000**.

In total, the six project partners contributed a minimum of **£107,790**.

Re: Lead Partner, University of Nottingham / Lakeside Arts

- In kind support as lead partner), £5,030 per annum = **£15,090**
- In kind lead organisation venue hire = **£11,250**
- Project co-ordination (cash support) = **£40,000**
- Cash support to internships = **£1,500**

In total, the University of Nottingham/Lakeside Arts contributed a minimum of **£67,840**. Additional resources were expended by programme partners relating to staffing time input and supervision and more.

Total support from all partners therefore amounted to **£175,630**.

The overall project costs of Creative Pathways programme amounted to **£468,945** including OfS grant, or approximately £156,000 per annum.

3/ Qualitative review

Part 1

Feedback from consultations with interns

3: Qualitative review (part 1): graduate interns' feedback

3.1 Introduction

The following sets out the feedback received from the graduate interns who were interviewed, grouped by the lines of enquiry adopted to guide our conversations into four main aspects:

	Key aspect	Lines of enquiry
A	Pre-internship	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What degree were they taking • What were they interested in / thinking about with regard to post-graduation life (eg their career choices) • What careers advice they sought / obtained • How they heard about Creative Pathways
B	Internship	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What tasks they did • What skills they learned (including general employability skills) • How well they were supported • How useful it was to link up with other interns • What they thought of the internship • Whether it confirmed they wanted to pursue a career in creative sector or not • Any aspects that could be improved
C	Academy programme	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What events they attended • What they felt they gained and what they valued • Any issues that could be improved
D	Current situation and outlook	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What their current situation is now – location, career or job • What their overall outlook is like and views on career prospects • What their ambitions or plans are for the next few years • Whether they want to remain in contact with UoN team

3.2 Pre-internship

3.2.1 Study

“What degree course did you take?”

Nine of the nineteen interns we interviewed had studied English at the University of Nottingham. A further five had studied English as a Joint degree (with German, American Studies or French).

Degree course	Number of interns*
English	9
English as a Joint Honours Degree	5
History and Politics	1
Modern Languages	1
Ancient History and History	1
Philosophy	1
Mechanical Engineering	1

Note: *From the 19 interviewed.

The prominence of English graduates (including those who studied English as part of a Joint Honours degree) is very noticeable. We were informed this was likely for two main reasons. One reason is the close alignment between those who have an interest in studying English and the activities of the organisations that were partners to the scheme. Another, we were informed, was that the Arts Faculty, and English Department specifically, were highly pro-active in promoting the scheme to their undergraduates.

3.2.2 Careers options and creative interests:

“What career options were you considering or interested in pursuing after graduation and what were your creative interests?”

All of the interns interviewed said that they had a strong level of interest in pursuing a career within the creative sector after they graduated, or at least finding out what options may be available to them.

They explained how they had some quite longstanding interest in creative pursuits – including drama (theatre and plays), reading, creative writing, poetry, music and videography. These interests often dated back a number of years to their early or mid-teens and some had pursued options at school – both formally through their A Level choices (such as Drama) and informally through out-of-school hour activities, such as getting involved in their school’s play productions including acting, performing music and other interests.

One intern had been particularly active prior to coming to university – running a blog on reading lists, working at Newstead Abbey and undertaking a short internship at Penguin publishing.

Those with a strong interest in theatre had typically got involved with the University’s

entirely student-run Nottingham New Theatre group. This in turn gave them a direct link to Lakeside Arts and awareness of the Creative Pathways programme.

Some also gained outside-campus experience whilst studying in Nottingham with work at the Galleries of Justice, Greens Windmill and a production at the Edinburgh Fringe Festival mentioned by some interns.

Interests in writing (including journalism), poetry, reading, and theatre were strong themes amongst their interests.

“

I was passionate about theatre and got involved with The New Theatre whilst a student

I put on a play at Lakeside in my second year and took a show to Edinburgh in my final year

I was interested in participation - to reach out to working class communities to help them access arts

”

3.2.3 Awareness and careers advice:

“How did you hear about the Creative Pathways programme, and did you seek any careers advice?”

Would-be interns found out about the Creative Pathways programme through a number of avenues, but two featured prominently in the responses:

- The English Department appears to have been very active in alerting English students by email, and
- the University’s Careers Service also played a prominent role in raising awareness, particularly for those in their final year when students often sought out Careers Service support.

Other avenues were jobs websites, including the Lakeside’s jobs page, pro-active alerts from other departments and those who had made personal contact – either with Lakeside Arts, or via their involvement with The New Theatre. In addition, through their student friendship groups and contacts, who had already graduated through the internship programme.

The fact that the internships were paid roles for six months rather than voluntary, unpaid positions was noted by several interns as being an important factor in the programme’s appeal. Also, six months provided an element of stability at the start of their career journeys.

Furthermore, the opportunity to stay locally within the Nottingham area after graduation was an appealing feature for many.

Note: In Year One (2019-2020), the internships were 7 months. This was reviewed in Year Two for two reasons: the rate of pay was increased in line with University of Nottingham pay rises and secondly feedback from Year One participants flagged to Lakeside that Terms & Conditions of accommodation rental were most usually for periods of 6 months and therefore 7 months was more difficult to arrange.

“

I got University Careers advice in my final year. They were aware of Creative Pathways and mentioned it to me

I got talking to a friend [first year intern] and it sounded great, and was highly recommended

It was well advertised at University

”

3.3 Internship

3.3.1 Tasks and overall experience:

“What were the main tasks you got involved with during your internship?”

Interns were involved in a wide range of tasks across their host organisations. These included:

- Dealing with finances and spreadsheets
- Working on databases
- Administration
- Events and festivals management
- Managing room bookings/hires
- Outreach and community engagement involving children, young people and adults
- Linking with schools
- Social media
- Website content
- Writing content for publicity materials
- Marketing
- Dealing with the public / customer facing roles on phone and in person, e.g. reception desk, box office
- Communications
- Programming (varied in type/breadth across different host venues).

These roles brought them into contact with freelance artists, schools, members of the public, as well as colleagues at various levels of seniority. Also, opportunities to work with producers, community groups, press and other cultural organisations in Nottingham and beyond.

Many mentioned they had been given the opportunity to get involved on a range of activities and appeared to have relished being exposed to delivering a variety of tasks, particularly those working for the smallest organisations.

They talked positively about the level of responsibility they had been given and most found the majority of the work they were tasked to deliver to be enjoyable and engaging. Widening community participation, including opportunities to link with schools, and dealing with a range of creatives (visual and performing arts sectors) and members of the local community, were cited by several interns as a highly positive feature of their experience. The main downsides reported related to the impact of Covid-19 restrictions, which were particularly challenging for organisational partners across the cultural sector.

Second year interns started their internships during a period of lockdown and were not able to physically meet with colleagues or go to their place of work until the final few weeks of their internship. Moving to

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online communication and remote working also impacted upon the delivery of the wider programme: academy events and group meetings having to be held online rather than “in person”.

“

I liked the fact my host organisation was small, so I got to do a lot of different tasks

I got involved in way more things than I had expected

”

3.3.2 Skills

“What skills do you think you acquired?”

In addition to specific skills acquired or improved reflecting the nature of the tasks each individual intern carried out, there was acknowledgment of wider employability skills they had developed.

For most it was the first experience of a full-time job, and working as part of a team, in a professional environment and gave them a solid first step on their career journey.

There was a general theme emerging from the consultations that the graduate internships had been an excellent first step into the jobs market from their life in academia, enabling them to get into a daily/weekly work routine and become used to a workplace environment.

Beyond this it has also provided them with contacts, and links to creative practitioners (through the internship and the Academy programme events) that they can make use of.

“

I learned lots about theatre programming

I learned many skills that I think are transferable

It has been a great way for us to transition into work

It provided a solid foundation and equipped us to get a good understanding of the creative sector

Getting professional, formal experience in an office

It gave me confidence

It helped me learn about self-employment

”

3.3.3 Support – host organisation

“How much support did you get from your host organisation?”

There was overwhelmingly positive feedback from interns on how well they had been supported both by their “host organisation” (partner employer) and the University’s Creative Pathways team. There was much praise for how they had been made to feel welcome in the workplace and efforts that were made to help them settle into their roles, even though the positions would only last for a relatively short period of time. Many talked about how friendly the staff had been, how welcomed they had been made to feel, and efforts to ensure they felt part of and a valued member of their respective teams.

One organisation was especially praised for making efforts to bring their new intern into the

workplace to meet their new colleagues informally, in advance of starting their internship. They may not have been unique in this respect, but all three of this organisation’s graduate interns made this point independently without prompting.

“

I felt I was a genuine member of the team

I felt valued and they would ask for my opinion on things

They listened to us and they cared

”

3.3.4 Support – programme / cohort model

“How much support did you get from the programme management team and what comments do you have about the cohort model?”

The programme had been developed to encourage the seven interns in each year to feel part of a wider team, with pro-active support from University facilitating regular meetings (fortnightly group sessions and also monthly workshop events), encouraging dialogue between cohorts and with the University, and making it clear there was a support system in place beyond their host organisation.

This was one of the aspects of the programme that received fulsome praise and was a highly valued feature by graduate interns, and also by programme partners. It enabled interns to learn more about each other’s area of work and the respective work of their organisations, develop associations and friendships. In effect, an intern at one organisation could learn about the work of six other organisations through the cohort approach and develop a much wider level of awareness of the creative sector than they would have done if the internship had been a simple six-month placement with one host. One of the benefits of this approach, as reported by the interns, was that it allowed them to talk as peers and share any problems or concerns they may have had with others, which they may not have done directly with their line managers. Having done so, they typically realised any questions or issues they had were often similar

and this gave them confidence to raise issues with line managers or work colleagues. Nurturing them as a team helped some to develop confidence to open up communication with their managers. The cohort approach is a real success story as part of the overall programme and one that stands out as a feature that sets it apart from other internship programmes we are aware of.

“

The cohort as a network of graduates is a big deal and really helped me feel settled, more confident and less lonely. We still meet up monthly as friends

Lots of effort was made to make us feel part of a unit – a real team

I learned about what others were doing – it helped me figure out what I am interested in and what I would like to do next

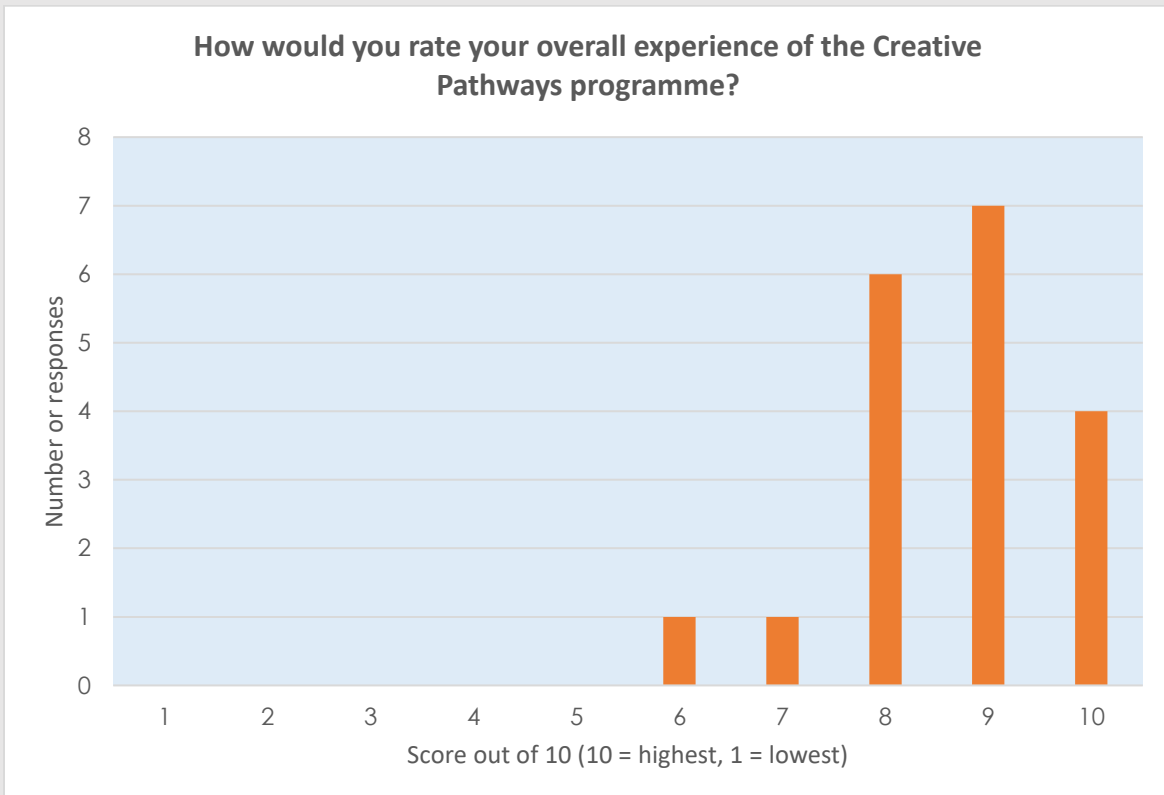
The network gave us links to senior staff at other organisations we’d never have got otherwise

”

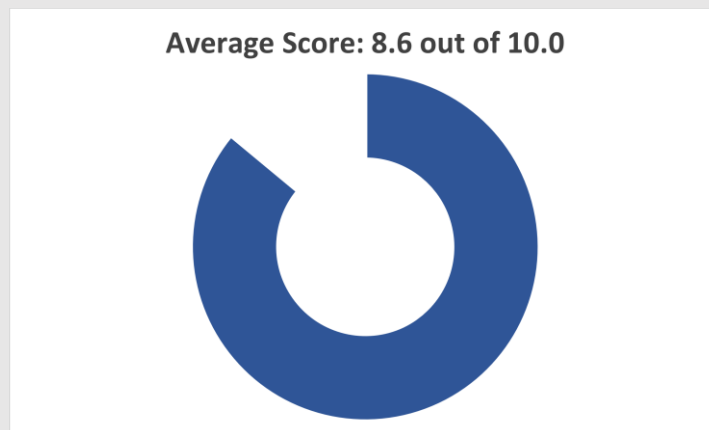
Figure 1: Overall rating of Creative Pathways experience

We asked the graduate interns we interviewed to provide a “score” on a 1-10 scale (1 representing very poor and 10 representing excellent) to the question:

“How would you rate your overall experience of the Creative Pathways programme?”



The responses were very positive. 17 of the 19 interns interviewed gave a score of 8, 9 or 10 and the average score equated to 8.6.



3.4: The Creative Academy

3.4.1 Attendance and experience

“Did you attend the Academy events and what were your thoughts on them?”

The Creative Academy was a programme of thematic events over the three years, bringing industry experts in to talk to students about their work and raise awareness of the breadth of opportunities that exist within the creative sector. In effect a series of careers talks from creative experts in senior positions.

Academy Events focused on careers in journalism (twice), gaming (twice), arts marketing, screen industries, creative technologies. These topics were selected following requested feedback from students attending and discussions with the University of Nottingham Careers and Employability Service. There were due to be 9 in-person events across the 3 years with each Academy lasting around 2.5 hours including networking over refreshments at the end of each presentation session.

In March 2020 when lockdown occurred, it was not possible to continue with in-person events and the third programme in Year 1 was cancelled on the day it was due to take place (16 March) due to the representatives from the Creative sector withdrawing due to Covid.

In 2021-22, Creative Academy Sessions were delivered online instead of in person. In addition, a series of hour-long on-line Creative Focus Events were introduced as a means to extend access and make use of the funding not now required for the post-event networking/refreshments element. This programme included Event Management (large-scale Great Northern Crafts Market); the UK Music Industry; Black Excellence in the Arts (media, marketing, advertising); and Podcasting. Live in-person events resumed in year 3. These are listed in **Appendix 1**.

Attendance at these was compulsory for interns, as part of their overall internship programme, although attendance, we understand, was not 100%. Like the internships, the second year of the Creative Academy programme was the most affected by Covid-19 restrictions and had to move to an online delivery format.

Most of our consultees said they had attended “at least two” events, sometimes three (or all of those programmed in their period of internship) and were largely positive about the content and how useful they had been. With the creative sector being so broad and wide in its range of specialisms, it is understandable if they were likely to be more interested in some events more than others.

Evaluation of Creative Pathways, for the University of Nottingham and Partners

That said some commented they had been surprised by how much they had enjoyed, or found informative, events they thought would not be of interest. The virtual reality event was mentioned by a few of the graduates in this respect.

Some were a little confused as to the expectations of their roles at the events - whether they had to actively promote the internship scheme or whether they had a more passive role along with others, to listen and make contacts.

Beyond the interns, we believe that efforts made by the University to develop a programme of “career awareness raising” events, with invited guest speakers, is to be supported.

The more “first-hand” information that undergraduates can access from industry

experts - providing insights into their world of work, their career pathways and advice they can impart – should be beneficial to many students.

“

It was really cool to chat to industry experts

It was good as I got to understand things I would have known about

One of the speakers was truly inspirational and it was great to hear from a successful woman in her line of work

”

3.5 Current situation and future outlook

We asked graduate interns about their current situation. All of the interns we consulted had stayed within and/or were planning to follow a career within the creative sector, or had moved or were moving into further creative degree courses. It was hard for them to project forward more than between 3 and 5 years as a careers horizon, bearing in mind their age and early stage they are at in their working life.

Overall, their own perspectives on the futures appeared to be very positive. They had appreciated the opportunity that Creative Pathways had given them, they acknowledged the robust foundation it had provided as an initial stepping stone on their career paths, and the skills, insights and contacts it had given them.

“

*A fantastic way to get your foot in the door and for those needing a springboard especially
from certain backgrounds*

*It has provided such an insight to help jump start our creative careers that we'd not have got
otherwise*

I want to stay locally and have a solid network in the sector

It made it possible to understand someone like me could progress into this sector

It has given me more confidence and feel able to reach out to others in the sector, locally

”

Many stated that the internship had given them a much greater understanding of the Nottingham creative sector and “arts scene” and had been impressed (and often surprised) by the extent and richness of the sector in the city. They often felt that the six month period had helped them gain a far greater awareness and appreciation of the city’s creative and cultural assets than their time as undergraduates, which they acknowledged could be considered a lifestyle “within a bubble”.

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Most of the interns did not originally come from Nottinghamshire (only 3) but 63% (12 of the 19 we interviewed) were still living in and around the Nottingham area and all bar two had no plans to leave the area in the near future. **Appendix 3, “Where are they now?”**, sets out our awareness of their current situation.

Again, a positive result of the programme has been the level of “graduate retention” within Nottingham’s local creative sector and local economy. With strong creative sectors in other major cities (London, Birmingham, Manchester etc.), with potentially strong pull factors, it was interesting to note that many interns felt Nottingham had plenty to offer them both as a place to live and opportunities in the creative industries sector. One factor that also plays a role is that several developed strong friendships with others in their cohort (and across intern years) and this had helped them feel more settled in Nottingham and more likely to stay, even if for a few further years.

This has shown Nottingham can compete with other larger urban centres when it comes to talent retention.

“

It’s been a real game changer

It has given me time to explore, reflect and build a portfolio of work

It has propelled my career forward. I felt I had a lot of options coming out of the internship and feel confident in applying for various roles

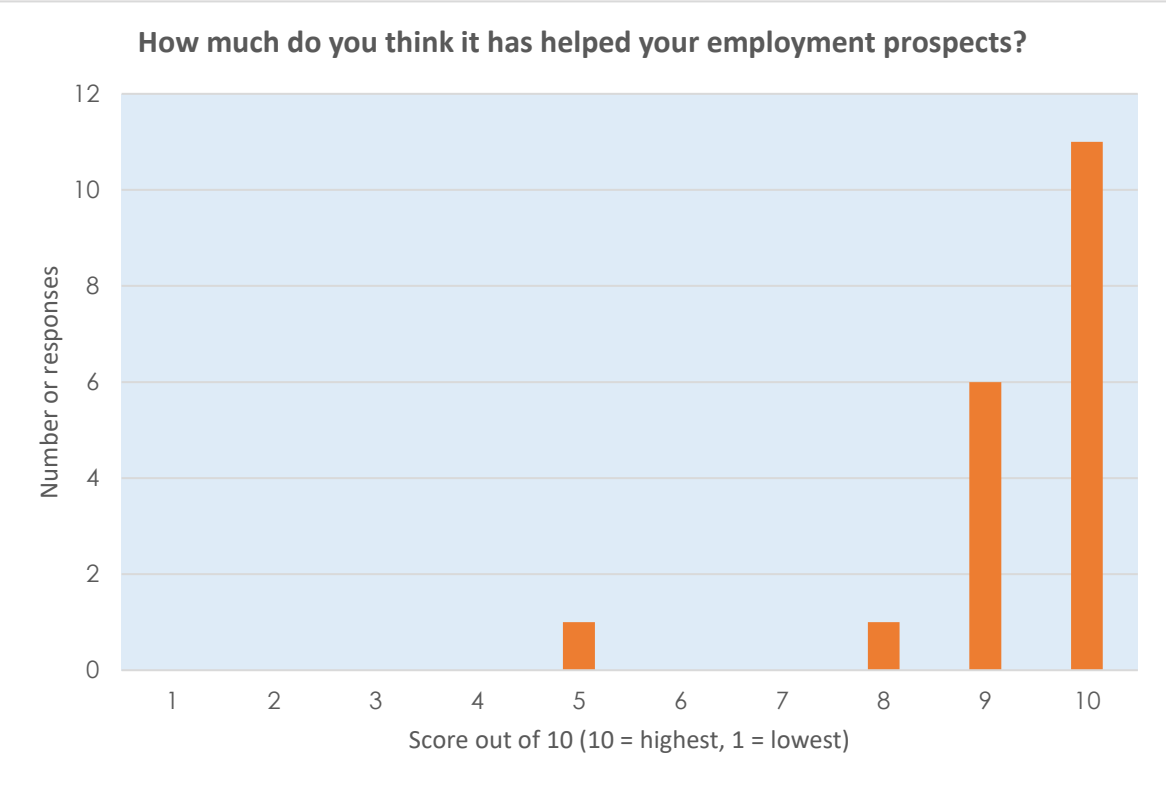
If I hadn’t have done the internship, I wouldn’t have had the skills needed to do my current job

”

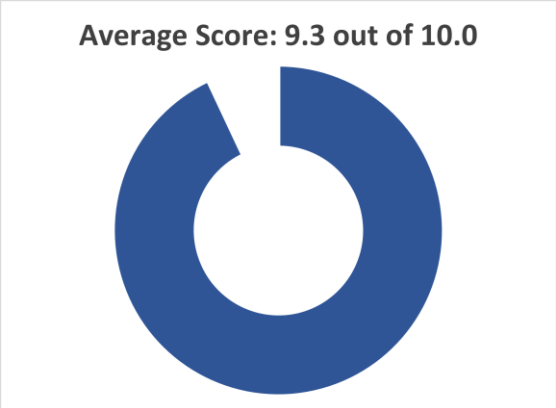
Figure 2: Impact on employment prospects

We asked the interns we interviewed to provide a “score” on a 1-10 scale (1 representing very poor and 10 representing excellent) to the question:

“How much do you think it has helped your employment prospects?”



11 of the 19 scored this 10, with a further six scoring it 9. A very positive recognition of how it had helped them (for reasons stated earlier) enter into the labour market and how they believed it would stand their career paths in good stead. The average score equated to 9.3.



3.6 Main benefits

All nineteen of the interns we consulted had stayed within and/or were planning to follow a career within the creative sector. One had found a part-time career within the NHS in order to pursue her freelance writing/workshops in relation to mental health and wellbeing also on a part-time basis.

When asked to identify the one main benefit and/or most positive feature of the Creative Pathways programme, they mentioned:

- The opportunity to build a network of contacts
- Finding out what they liked / disliked and clarifying what they would be more interested in or better suited for in terms of next stage jobs
- The development of a robust foundation to their CV
- They had grown in confidence
- They had had their eyes opened to the Nottingham arts scene and found it to be friendly, vibrant and one they wanted to stay in for a while
- They had developed confidence to become self-employed
- They had made new friends and positive work contacts
- It had helped them push themselves to network their “personal brand” (to start building a reputation within the creative sector).

“

I didn't think I would get into drama as I hadn't studied it at school – this has got my foot in the door and helped establish a career

Great for Nottingham and helping us with mentors and connections

The whole programme was built on integrity and trusting us to do a good job

I learned about job roles (and opportunities) I would never have known existed

”

Benefits to graduates: summary

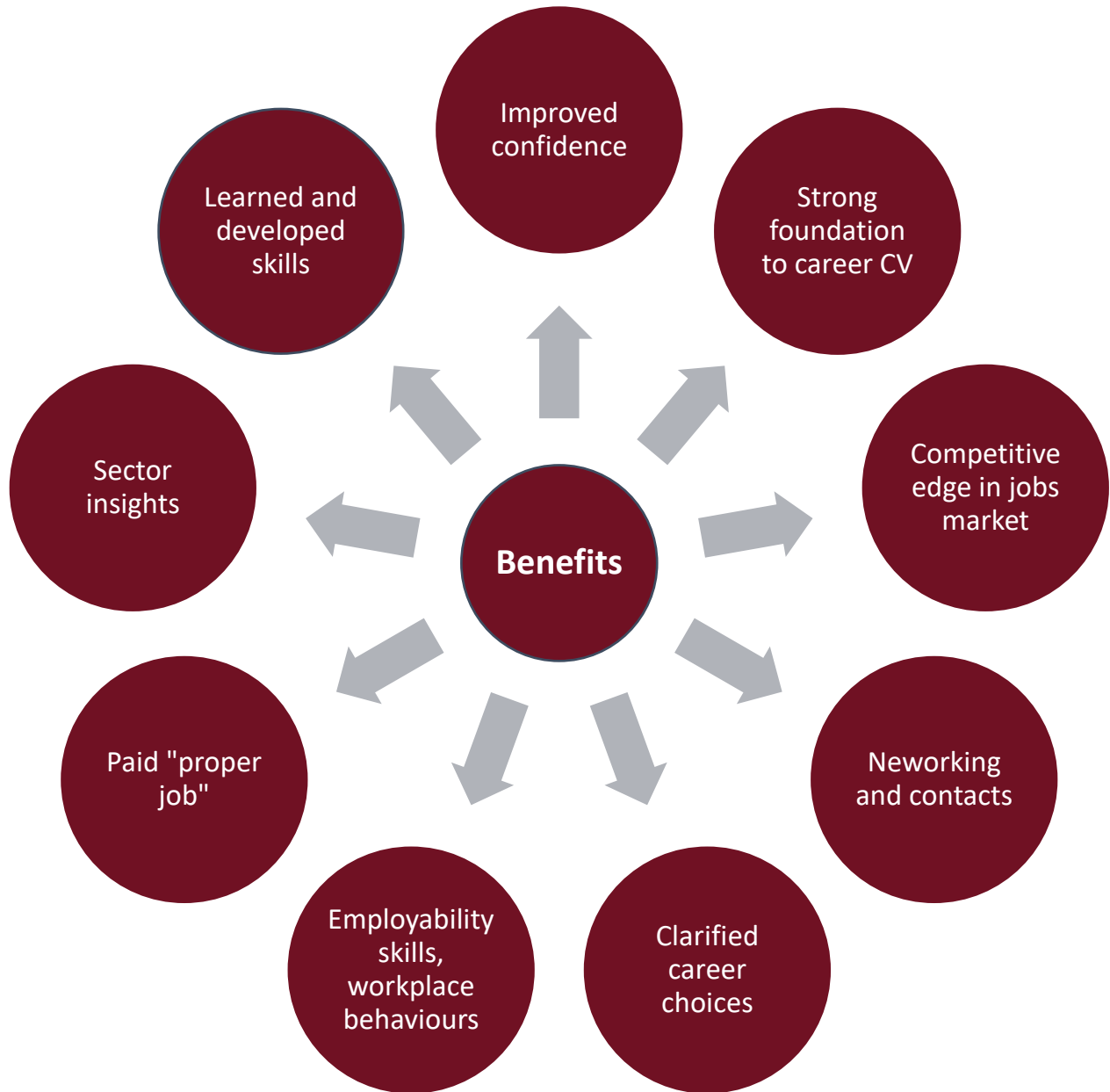
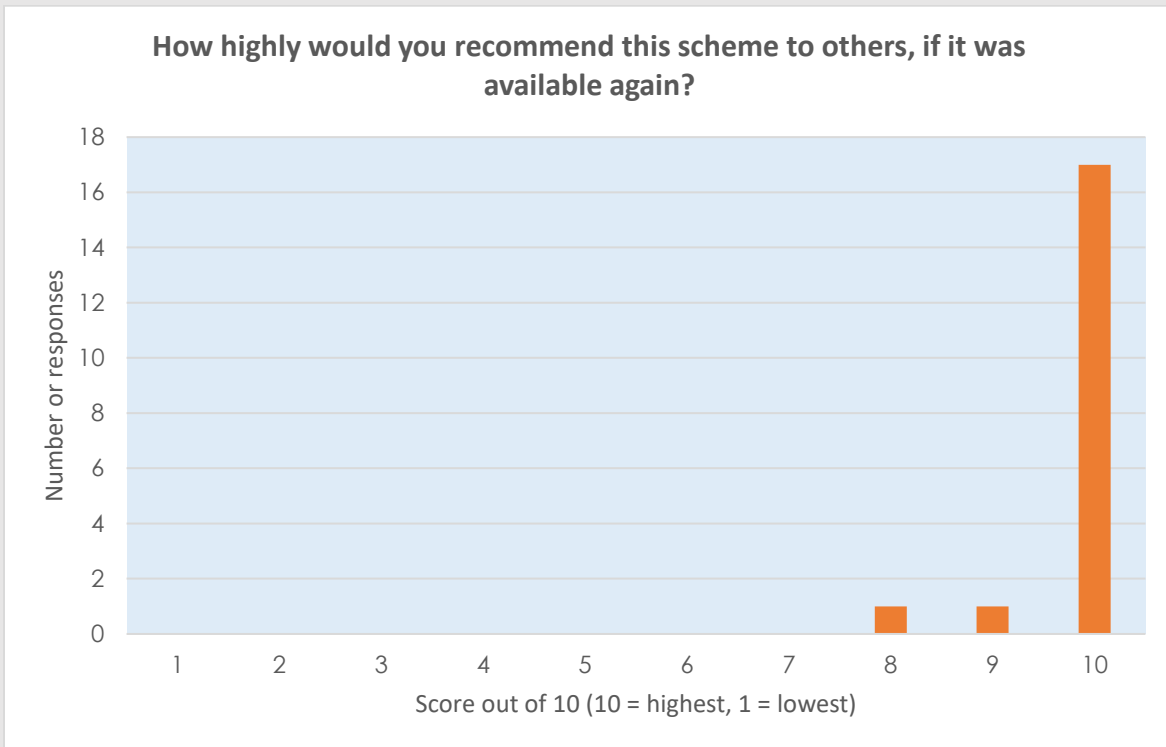


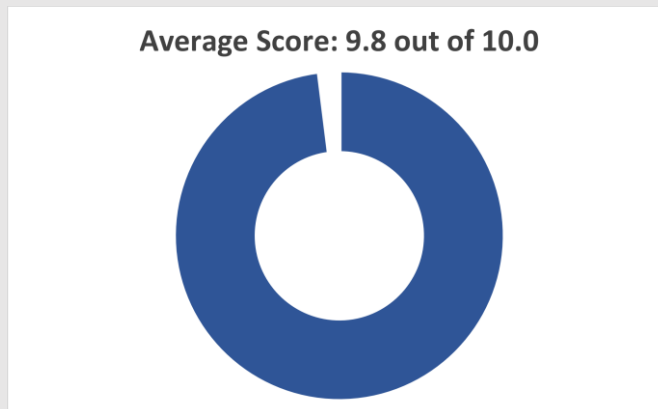
Figure 3: Endorsement

We asked the interns we interviewed to provide a “score” on a 1-10 scale (1 representing very poor and 10 representing excellent) to the question:

“How highly would you recommend this scheme to others (if it was available again)?”



A highly encouraging 17 of the 19 interviewed scored this a maximum 10. The average score equated to 9.8.



3.7 Areas for improvement

There were very few suggestions for improvement of the programme. A couple of interns' experience of the programme was not as positive as the majority. In one case this was because their career interests didn't align closely with the work of the partner organisations, however even they acknowledged the merits of the programme, its help in developing a CV and the efforts made to develop a team ethos around the cohort of interns. Another reported they had not really enjoyed the work they had to do during their internship, but even so recognised the value of the programme and commented that it was "an excellent programme overall".

We struggled to get comments on any major areas for improvement from the interns' experience. Some suggestions were mentioned:

- Extending the internship for longer (9 or 12 months)
- Targeting marketing campaigns at an early stage (Year 1 students)
- Consider widening the creative sector opportunities available to include: video gaming design, making/ videography, graphic design etc.
- Opportunities for formal job shadowing of other interns – specific allowance of time to spend in other partner organisations
- Looking at widening participation further - *"there seemed to be a lot of white females"*
- More weighting to those more in (socio-economic) need
- Involve interns in helping develop topics for the Academy programme.

With reference to a couple of graduate interns interviewed saying their internship had not aligned with their strengths or interests, it may be the case that applicant's career interests are explored further during interview stage.

3.8 Case studies

The project captured the progress of the graduate interns over the three years and also marked the “graduation” of each cohort with an event and a method of recording their experiences and feedback – a documentary style film in Year 1; an animation in Year 2 (these can both be viewed here: <https://www.lakesidearts.org.uk/students/creative-pathways.html> and a comic zine (booklet) in Year 3. Through our own interviews we also gathered significant feedback as has been set out in this section. Below we have aimed to highlight three individuals (one from each year) and provide a snapshot of their experience.

Year One, Daniel, Nonsuch Studios

Daniel, from Staffordshire, was studying English at the University of Nottingham and had a strong interest in theatre and play writing. He got involved with the University’s New Theatre and put on a play at Lakeside Arts and took a show to Edinburgh in his final year. His internship with Nonsuch Studios involved marketing and programming work, involving artist liaison, social media and studio management. Within a small team he got involved in a wide variety of activities, which he appreciated and enjoyed having a lot of responsibility. He learned about process involved in theatre programming, contacts, bookings and working with freelancers. Nonsuch Studios wanted to keep Daniel on post-internship and he worked as “Programme and Production Co-ordinator” overseeing and planning the organisation’s programme of public events, including a large outdoor summer festival. Alongside this role, Daniel continued his passion of playwriting and directing and at the time we interviewed him, was still at Nonsuch Studios and had a desire to stay locally having developed a solid network of contacts across Nottingham’s creative industries and beyond.

Year Two, Amelia Coburn, City Arts Nottingham

Amelia, from Middlesbrough, was studying Modern Languages at the University of Nottingham and had a strong interest in music as she had already performed at her school and continued with her singer/songwriter passion at University. The community side of City Arts Nottingham’s work appealed to Amelia and her internship also led to contact with a board member who runs a folk club in Radcliffe-on-Trent and invited her to play a featured night here as part of my tour. Her work with City Arts Nottingham also put her in contact with local community arts group called Whippet Up based in Redcar, Middlesbrough.

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Since leaving the internship, Amelia has been self-employed in music full time and returned to her geographical roots in Tees Valley area but performs nationally. To help her navigate this journey she applied for the prestigious English Folk Expo mentoring scheme and luckily was selected as one of the four 2021/22 participants. This has led to her being mentored by an industry professional on how to make my music into a sustainable business plan, and the programme also entails networking and performing at music conferences and festivals such as Cambridge Folk Festival.

Year Three, Daniella Taiwo, Nottingham Contemporary

Daniella came from London to study Engineering at the University of Nottingham and found that the design aspects of her degree course and her love of the arts generally was something she wanted to pursue more than more traditional engineering options. She gained experience of working within the Learning and Marketing teams at Nottingham Contemporary enabling her to develop skills across documentation, copywriting, creating newsletters and workshop planning and delivery. One of her highlights was assisting in sessions designed to provide creative activities for young people with learning disabilities, helping them gain skills to support their transition into adult life. She appreciated the opportunities of the support network and contacts made during her time on Creative Pathways. Since the internship, Daniella has secured a job at The Curve in Leicester working on digital content and with local communities. She reported that the skills she acquired during her internship were invaluable to giving her a competitive edge in the recruitment process for her current role and delivering the work.



Year 1 Creative Pathways Graduate Interns

4/ Qualitative Review

Part 2

Feedback from consultations with partners

4: Qualitative review (part 2): project partners' feedback

4.1 Introduction

We consulted Steering Group members and key representatives of partner organisations involved in the Creative Pathways programme commencing with an initial group discussion on 27 April. Individual consultations were held from 29 April through to 5 August.

We also consulted a couple of key stakeholders who had not been involved in the programme, but with a view to the future and legacy of the programme, we felt it important to consult: **Nottingham City Council** and the **Nottingham Strategic Cultural Partnership** to gain a strategic perspective.

The following sets out the feedback received from the partners, grouped by key lines of discussion.

4.2 Main benefits of the programme to the partner organisations

Creative Pathway partners were unanimously positive about their involvement with and experience of the programme. Whilst acknowledging the benefits that the graduates had gained from their experience, partners highlighted a number of benefits to them:

Additional capacity: this was appreciated by all partners. Having three phases of six month internships provided genuine extra capacity to help them deliver necessary work and support their wider teams. These were not “fake jobs” created to fulfil the needs of internship placements. In organisations with smaller staffing complements, additional capacity was particularly welcomed.

“

We are a small team, so the extra resource has been helpful

The programme enabled us to breathe a bit, provide additional capacity and add value

”

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Fresh perspectives and youth voice and input: many partners stated it had been helpful to have graduates bringing a youthful and fresh perspective, enabling the host organisation to review what it delivers, how it targets its audiences and also bringing much needed skills to the role (notably around confidence in using social media and some design software – opening up the use of new technologies to help partner organisations with marketing materials and databases).

“

Helpful to have a young person’s way of looking at things”

We work with a lot of young people (our audience) so having young talent with fresh perspectives helped us to link more closely and relate to them better

Peer learning and peer support has been a major success

”

Recruitment: some partners recognised that the internships had helped them re-think their recruitment policies, or simply to become more open to a younger pool of talent as potential new recruits.

“

It has helped us become better at being more open to young recruits and taking them on

We have leveraged the internship roles into permanent ones

All three of our interns were great – they brought energy, new perspectives and learning to our organisation

”

4.3 Main benefits for Nottingham's creative sector

Graduate retention: One of the OfS objectives of its Challenge Programme is to support activity designed to provide a counterbalance to graduates moving to London. Creative Pathways has done well to achieve the level of retention of graduates in the Nottingham and local area. As reported from our intern interviews, many have stayed locally following their internship, some 63% of those interviewed. That may change over the next two or three years as they are the infancy of their working lives, but it was encouraging to note how many had stayed and wanted to stay in Nottingham and felt the city had a lot to offer, in terms of the creative sector and also for their lifestyles.

Partnership working: Partners commented on how the programme had helped them forge closer working relationships through a better understanding of one another. Whilst most had some relationship and contact with others before the programme, it has helped cement those relationships and gain a greater insight into the wider local creative sector. One reported it had helped raise their own profile more widely as the other partners became good “ambassadors” for them, and working as a team, it has helped individual organisations to input into strategic discussions and look at some funding opportunities collectively.

“

It has been useful to us to think about how we work as a sector, especially around careers pathway issues”

The partnership has helped us understand who does what, gain a better mutual understanding, learn from one another and pull together

The Careers Service has been incredibly supportive of this work

We mostly knew one another but it helped lead to improved co-ordination – eg on the National Portfolio Organisations bid

We want to nurture talent even if they move onto another organisation

”

4.4 Main challenges and areas for improvement

Employment contracts: In the first year there were several issues experienced around the administration of payroll which initially required timely completion and submission of timesheets by each intern as the contracts were paid hourly (although full-time). Once issues were known and raised with the University, they were rapidly resolved. However, in order to avoid any recurrence, the decision was taken to change the nature of the contracts to fixed-term in year two so that the interns were part of the formal University payroll. There were no further issues from that point forwards.

Covid-19 and lockdowns: Covid-19 and public health restrictions posed a challenge with delivery having to move to an online format. Year Two interns were particularly affected by this, with their internship starting in early 2021 and ending June 2021, so they had to “meet” their new colleagues online / remotely and carry out and be supervised remotely until it was clear to meet up in person. The first time the Year Two interns were all together in one physical location was at the planning of their socially-distanced Graduation Ceremony; this occasion also provided an opportunity for the Year One interns to ‘graduate’. Lockdown also impacted upon the team building work across the cohort of the delivery of the Academy events programme, all moving to online formats.

Covid-19 had a major impact on the creative sector, notably those whose work centres upon theatre/performance and events, with programmes having to be postponed or cancelled and significant uncertainties and challenges for each of the partner organisations.

Academy attendance: Attendance at the Creative Academies programme was reported to have “really tailed off” in its final year. This could in part be due to the phased return to live and in-person events in 2021-22 with continuing uncertainties for many about being in an enclosed space with lots of other people. There was some disappointment that interns had not attended each event, as it was included in their Learning Agreement. As we reported in **Section 3** some interns had been unclear on their role or expected input at these events. In future, it is an area that would need some attention to address concerns, but a programme of careers talks / events is one we believe adds great value to helping students identify potential career paths and stimulating interest.

Training budget: There was a small training budget and some partners said they could have been better at planning out how to use that more effectively and some thought it might have been better to be retained as a central resource to draw upon. This was trialled in Year Three when an audit of all the areas of interest for the seven interns resulted in the programming of shared training events, including a Fundraising Training Session, which all found to be useful.

Evaluation of Creative Pathways, for the University of Nottingham and Partners

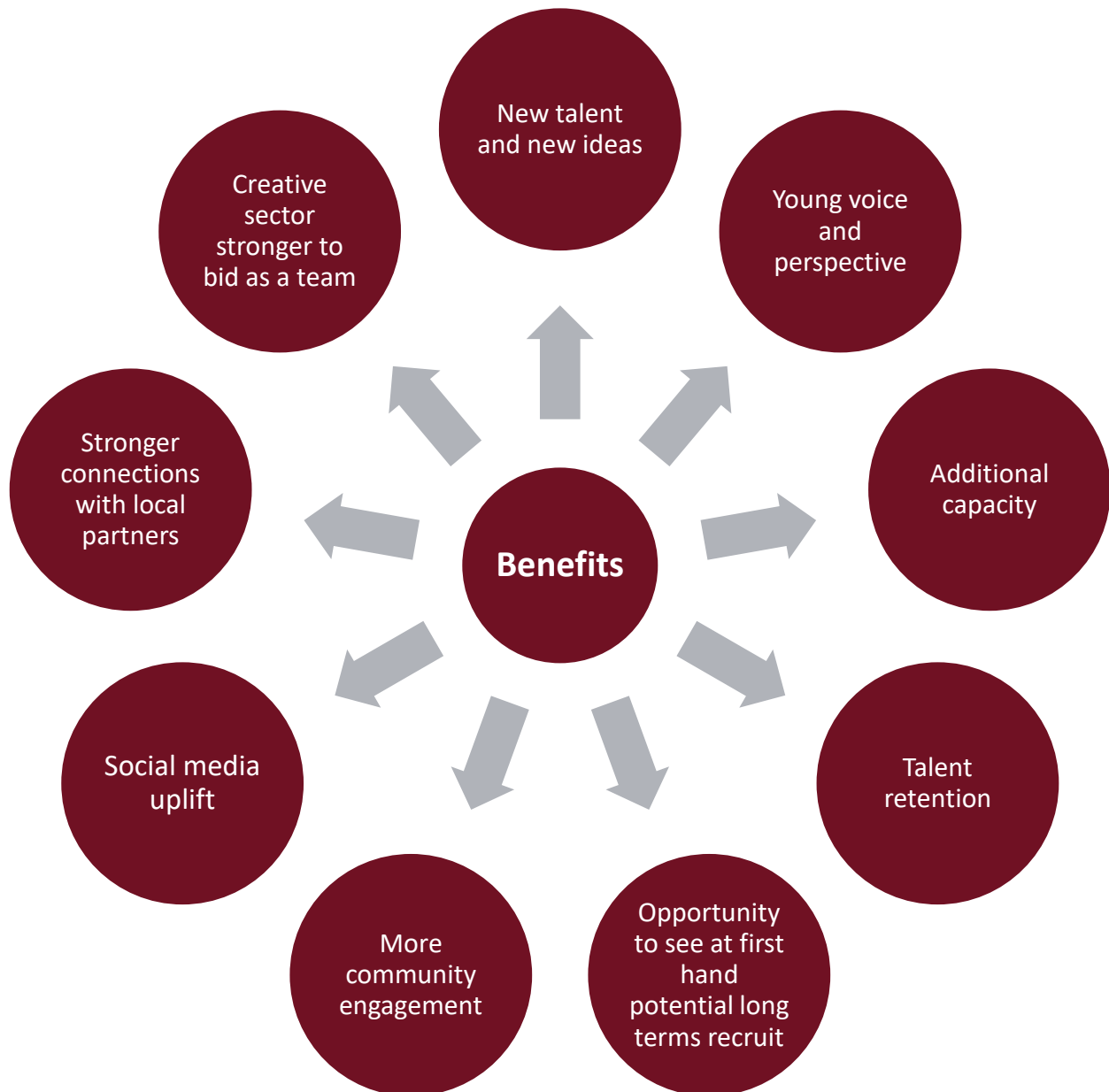
Recruitment: In order to reach the target group, the University used the criteria (see **Appendix 2**) that applies to Widening Participation students. Those interested in Creative Pathways were required to meet at least one of these criteria in order to meet eligibility requirements for the Internships.

All shortlisting was anonymised, information relating to gender only became apparent when shortlisted candidates were confirmed, and direct contact had to be established to invite candidates to interview. In the final year of recruitment a number of applicants progressed to shortlisting stage through a Disability Confident scheme introduced and operated by the University. This ensured that candidates who have a disability and who have registered for the scheme are guaranteed an interview if they meet the minimum criteria for the role. A number of the successful candidates were known to be first in family to attend university and several mentioned disabilities in their conversations.

Gender split across all 3 years was 81% Female; 14% Male; 5% Prefer not to Say. 5% identified as Black, 5% as Mixed and 90% as White. The high percentage of successful female candidates reflected the high percentage of female candidates who were shortlisted. Steering Group Members acknowledged more work is needed to reach, attract and appoint ethnically diverse candidates. There was one additional ethnically diverse appointment in Year 2, however this person was then offered a permanent role closer to their home and chose to accept it.

The University of Nottingham ranks as one of the best in the country and attracts some of the most academically capable school leavers to enrol as undergraduates. The programme did target young people who perhaps, given the barriers that exist in the sector, would not have otherwise been able to successfully compete for these positions. Consultations with the graduates confirmed that if the internships had been unpaid roles, this would have been a barrier to engagement as they would not have been able to afford to take on the positions.

4.5 Benefits to creative organisations: summary



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Some feedback from partners highlighting the overall impressions of Creative Pathways.

“

It was a great programme. It has proved its worth

*It has been great watching them grow and seeing their
confidence develop*

*The model is a good one: create a cohort, develop a
community of practice, help the socialisation of the group
and make them feel part of a team*

”

5/ Conclusions, options and recommendations

5: Conclusions, options and recommendations

5.1 Conclusions

Reflecting on our overall evaluation research findings, we believe that the Creative Pathways programme has been a great success.

For creative sector organisations who were partners to the programme it has:

- given them graduate talent provided additional capacity they would have struggled to afford
- helped develop and cement relationships across the partners which can only benefit Nottingham's creative sector more generally
- enabled a greater level of community engagement and outreach into Nottingham communities by the local arts sector; and
- delivered a strong degree of graduate retention in the sector.

Whilst the numbers are quite small, the quality of the experience was important and the scale of the cohort provided a manageable but intimate sized team each year, to develop bonds, share knowledge, develop friendships and learn about the variety of organisations and job roles they would not have found if they worked in isolation.

The cohort model and its peer learning benefits are central to the success of the scheme as have been the commitment of the partners to take on interns, to supervise and help them learn, work and develop. The cohort model of engaging with the team of interns as a group and providing ongoing support sets it apart from most other internship type programmes.

For the graduates, the clear benefits were significant. It helped them:

- get used to workplace behaviours
- develop confidence
- acquire skills
- build their CV
- make contacts
- gain insights from creative industries professionals and
- develop their networks, including individuals with successful freelance careers and a number working in specialist areas of the creative industries.

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The programme helped them feel more settled in Nottingham, appreciate its rich and diverse arts and creative scene, and gave them a robust basis to their career pathway. It also helped confirm their appetite for working in the sector and nurtured their interests.

Feedback from intern graduates and programme partners overwhelmingly wanted to see the scheme (or something like it) continue in the future.

There are some areas that could have been improved, for instance the importance and benefits of participating in the Academy programme, but these are marginal when considering the overall programme, its objectives and impact it has made.

The model itself has significant features that have made it a success and in principle, this could be applied to a variety of business or employment sectors. For the purposes of this assignment, we shall focus upon the creative sector.

5.2 Considerations and Options

Issues to consider

To take forward a future or “follow-on” programme, we suggest there are a number of key issues to be considered:

- Funding options
- Strategic alignment
- Scale (size of cohort or volume of interns)
- Length of internship
- Sectors
- Partners
- Graduate level
- Apprenticeship or non-graduate level
- Geography.

Funding:

Availability of future funding is central to whether a “follow-on” programme can be implemented and having explored resource availability across partners, it is apparent that a follow-on scheme would be reliant on external funding to provide the resources for a paid internship programme.

The partners have contributed significantly in terms of staff time, provision of office space, in-house training and associated costs, but significant investment would need to be sourced.

Potential sources to explore include: the new Combined Authority (which will, in effect, incorporate the role of the D2N2 LEP), Local Authorities, Trusts and Foundations, national arts and creative sector infrastructure support agencies (for example Arts Council England) and philanthropic giving, plus the universities.

Strategic alignment:

The programme and its benefits align with the agenda around graduate retention, skills and employability, economic development and sector growth as well as arts and cultural support strategies. The skills shortages acknowledged in the original application to OfS – and which this project sought to begin to

Evaluation of Creative Pathways, for the University of Nottingham and Partners

address – remain a considerable issue for the sector. In fact, the shortages of trained staff are even more acute post-Covid.

Scale:

The programme cohort size reflected the funding available. Circa £100k per annum grant, translated into seven 6-month internship opportunities. Many partners and interns liked this size of cohort. It was small enough to engender an intimate team each year and enable them to develop strong bonds. Considering any growth in size (which would be dependent on funding), an optimum size was considered to be around 10-12 interns as a group. Some said they could take on more than one intern at a time, but there are several other local organisations (see potential future partners) who may wish to engage in a future programme.

Length of internship:

Anything less than 6 months was considered too short to make a real difference, but many would welcome a slightly longer period of internship, maybe up to 9 months. Again, this would need additional resources.

Wider creative industry sectors:

There could be opportunities to widen the type of creative sectors involved in an internship programme. The creative industries sector is vast, but some extension beyond the existing partners to include museums, graphic design, journalism, videography, AR/VR, music, gaming design etc could be options worth considering.

Additional partners:

Other Nottingham based creative sector partners that could be engaged in a future programme include:

- Theatre Royal and Royal Concert Hall
- Nottingham Castle
- Galleries of Justice
- Wollaton Hall
- New Art Exchange
- Confetti
- Broadway
- Festival of Science and Curiosity
- National Ice Centre
- Nottingham Youth Orchestra
- Metronome
- Nottingham Music Hub
- Left Lion
- Notts TV
- Nottingham Evening Post

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Graduate level programme:

If partners want to continue with a graduate level programme for Nottingham, it makes sense (and we believe will help make a stronger partnership case to prospective external funders) if The University of Nottingham and Nottingham Trent University collaborate as a joint initiative. By bringing their complementary strengths and graduate talent pool together, the two universities working in partnership could strengthen their case to a funder looking at the issue of graduate employment across Nottingham and the creative sector.

Non-graduates:

Some form of longer-term apprenticeship, opening up career pathways for Nottingham school leavers, would merit consideration. This would certainly chime with the ambition to diversify the sector, help widen participation and support social mobility. It would also require a longer-term support package and likely, more intensive commitments from employers to support this. This may form part of a wider debate to be had with wider Nottingham partners and viewed as an additional opportunity beyond a more graduate-focused programme.

Geography:

There is strong support to continue a scheme that assists Nottingham's creative sector, but there may be opportunities to extend its reach into the north of the county. This could reflect needs to widen participation and provide opportunities as part of the "levelling up" agenda, but also funding regimes that may flow from the new Combined Authority.

Options

In theory there are endless options that could be considered. We would advise being guided by realistic funding opportunities and the widening participation theme as some key criteria for establishing a preferred option. Below we suggest four options for consideration and then set out benefits and challenges to each.

1. Programme on same scale (7 graduates per annum), but just University of Nottingham graduates
2. Programme on same scale with University of Nottingham and Nottingham Trent University graduates
3. Larger scale programme with the 2 universities (maybe 12-15 graduates per annum)*
4. Apprenticeship type programme for school leavers.**

*There may be an opportunity to explore a Nottingham and Derby programme with the 2 Nottingham universities and University of Derby combining to provide a larger programme. This may have some appeal to the Combined Authority for D2N2.

**A programme aimed at local school leavers would require careful design and close collaboration with wider educational partners to help design an appropriate model. We would suggest it would require a longer-term support model and apprenticeships would likely require more input from host organisations, requiring more of a draw upon their supervision and support time. That said, if the creative sector is serious about seeking to widen participation amongst its workforce, a programme to attract young talent and to support those that may not want to go to University, or would not otherwise consider the sector as an appropriate career pathway for them, merits consideration. This could run alongside a graduate-only programme and form part of a wider Creative Sector Workforce Development Strategy for Nottingham.

Evaluation of Creative Pathways, for the University of Nottingham and Partners

Option 1: Programme on same scale – University of Nottingham

Benefits

- Continuity from existing Creative Pathways programme
- Systems in place, partnership well developed
- Same benefits as CP delivered

Challenges

- Securing funding - limited appeal to external funders and would likely mostly rely on UoN resource and those of partners (in-kind and cash)

Option 2: Programme on same scale – University of Nottingham and Nottingham Trent University

Benefits

- Some continuity and model to build upon
- Potential for wider reach to graduates from wider range of backgrounds - social mobility
- Potential to link to NTU North Notts presence (Mansfield) and a more localised cohort from "left behind" communities

Challenges

- Securing funding but business case likely to be stronger as a joint initiative
- Would need detailed discussions with NTU to agree upon and formulate a partnership model that suits both university partners

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Option 3: UoN and NTU joint partnership with larger scale programme

Benefits

- Some continuity and model to build upon
- Potential for wider reach to graduates from wider range of backgrounds - social mobility
- Potential to link to NTU North Notts presence (Mansfield) and a more localised cohort from "left behind" communities
- More graduates to benefit from opportunity
- More creative sector partners to be involved and benefit
- More impact on Nottingham / Nottinghamshire creative sector

Challenges

- Securing funding - however business case likely to be stronger as a joint initiative
- Would need detailed discussions with NTU to agree upon and formulate a partnership model that suits both university partners
- Larger cohort to manage
- More administrative support likely required

Option 4: Apprenticeship type programme – school leavers

Benefits

- Widening participation agenda, leading to greater diversity within the sector
- Social mobility agenda
- More opportunities for local young people to access opportunities within Nottingham's creative sector
- More appeal to funders around the "levelling up" and social mobility agendas

Challenges

- Longer term support likely required
- Employer contributions
- Likely to need to broaden the array of internship opportunities (to include design, ICT, gaming, music, film production etc.)

5.3 Recommendations

The University of Nottingham and the creative sector partners involved with Creative Pathways, have delivered a project which has provided many benefits (as highlighted above and throughout the report) and one would we have no hesitation in recommending it be extended, or a programme that builds upon this primary model. The project has provided a high-quality experience for graduates who are now better equipped to develop a career path within the creative sector.

The principles could be applied to the creative sector in any locality seeking to develop a graduate internship programme, by partnering a Higher Education institution with creative sector organisations or businesses. It could also be applied to other business sectors.

This has been an excellent model which has delivered real and lasting benefits, and the main question arising now is to “how to sustain it?”.

Our recommendations form a series of “next steps” for the Creative Pathways Steering Group:

1. Press Release:

University of Nottingham and colleagues across all partner organisations develop a press release and related communications programme in partnership with OfS to support launch of the Evaluation Report and highlight lessons learned from the Creative Pathways programme.

2. Host a Nottingham Creative sector event:

Showcase findings from the Creative Pathways programme and this evaluation. Shine a light on what has worked well and why. Invite all relevant creative sector organisations from across the City and Greater Nottingham area and invite comment on the potential for sustaining a graduate programme.

3. Bilateral with Nottingham Trent University:

Set up a meeting with Nottingham Trent University to discuss potential for a collaborative approach to a future phase model, related to Options 2 and 3 above.

4. Review and exhaust all local funding options:

Continue discussions internally within the University of Nottingham, across Steering Group partners and with Nottingham City Council and potentially Nottinghamshire County Council and D2N2LEP to review latest / future funding opportunities.

5. Review external funding options:

Desk based research into Trust and Foundation funding, corporate giving, and strategic funding options. Plan a funding strategy based upon prioritised funding options.

6. Develop business case:

Depending on likely funding opportunities, develop a business plan to make a business case to relevant funders and potential investors.

7. National event:

Explore potential to reach a national audience in partnership with OfS, showcasing Creative Pathways, the model, its achievements and lessons learned. This may also lead to dialogue with other towns and cities which have developed or are trying to establish similar schemes, and there may be useful reflections and advice from elsewhere to help Nottingham partners seeking to secure a longer term programme.

Appendices

Appendix 1: Creative Academy events

2019-20 Academies (in person)

15 October 2019, *Careers in the Arts*

Spotlight on Gaming with Sarah Longthorne, Digital Narrative Design. Also panel 'How I got into the arts' with Niamh Caines, Finance, Soho Theatre; Phil Geller, Production Management; Ellie Cawthorne, BBC History Magazine.

4 December 2019, *Careers in the Arts*

Spotlight on Journalism with Jem Collins, Journo-Resources. Also seminar sessions 'Arts Marketing' with Andy Batson, Head of Audiences and Partnerships, Nottingham Contemporary and 'Founding and running a small-scale venue' with Edward Boott, Nonsuch Studios.

16 March 2020, *Careers in the Arts*

Spotlight on Hetain Patel, freelance film maker/choreographer/visual artist. Also 'speed dating' session with representatives from across the creative industries sector including radio, video, marketing, graphic design, gaming. ***This event was cancelled on the day due to Covid.***

2020-21 Academies (online) Moved to a single focus for each event

22 October 2020, *Marketing the Arts*

Andy Batson, Head of Audiences and Partnerships, Nottingham Contemporary; Ruthba Chowdry, Marketing Manager, Dance4; Bea Lowry, Digital & Marketin Assistant, Lakeside Arts; Annie Scally, Consortium Manager, Ticketing Network East Midlands

19 November 2020, *Screen Industries*

Joe Talbot (Short Form Films), Andy Clarke (Wellington Films)

23 February 2021, *Games Industries*

Sarah Longthorne, Narrative Designer; Daniel Punch, Senior Programmer; Harriet Eden, 3-D artist, all from SUMO Digital.

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Plus Four Creative Focus events introduced during lockdown (online)

19 January, *Event Management*

Anne-marie Franey and Angela Mann, founders of Great Northern Contemporary Events

16 March, *Podcasting*

Christian Hewgill (Sports reporter, journalist BBC Newsbeat)

28 April, *UK Music*

Jamie Njoku-Goodwin, Chief Executive, UK Music

8 June 2021, *Black Excellence in the Arts: Media, Marketing and Talent Management* - Chrystal Genesis, Presenter, Producer, Consultant (New York); David Osei, Head of Marketing and Communications, Creative Access; and Cynthia Okoye, Talent Manager, Curtis Brown

2021 -22 (Three Blended events delivered in person and online)

26 October, *Creative Technologies*

Catherine Allen (Limina Immersive) and Alex Ruhl (Cats are Not Peas)

22 February, *Journalism*

Jem Collins (Journo Resources), Ellie Cawthorne (BBC History Podcast) and Chandni Sembhi (Pink News)

5 April, *Screen Industries*

Emma Turner (Screen Skills) and Alexzandra Jackson (BFI Midlands)

A total of 12 events delivered (13 planned).

Appendix 2: Widening participation – priority groups

These Internships were exclusively for students from the priority groups listed below. This was to ensure that students from backgrounds underrepresented in Higher Education could fully access the opportunities available to all students and to improve social mobility.

To apply they needed to be a home fee paying student at the University of Nottingham, want to gain practical experience to support their future career development in the creative and cultural sector, and meet one or more of the criteria below:

- Have been in local authority care/looked after
- Have a declared disability
- Be from a black and minority ethnic group
- Be a mature student (21 or over at the start of your course)
- Be a young carer
- Be under 25 and estranged from your family
- Be in receipt of a core bursary
- Be in receipt of a Nottingham Potential Bursary
- Be a refugee
- Your home address is in a neighbourhood where participation in Higher Education is low.

Appendix 3: Where are they now?

To the best of our knowledge (from the interviews with 19 of the graduate interns), their current situation in terms of location and employment or study status is:

Graduate Intern	Originally from	Still in and around the Nottingham area / E. Mids	Working within the creative sector	Further studies, creative sector related
Katie	Surrey	✓	✓	
Kate	Cardiff	✓	✓	
Alice	Suffolk			✓
Cecilia	South East	✓	✓	
Daniella	London	✓	✓	
Issy	Watford	✓	✓	
Eleanor	London	✓	✓	
Amelia	Middlesbrough		✓	
Emily T	Devon	✓	✓	
Emily B	Nottinghamshire	✓	✓	
Gianluca	London		✓	
Adam	Nottinghamshire	✓	✓	
Phoebe	Sheffield		✓	
Grace	Warwickshire		✓	
Daniel	Staffordshire	✓	✓	
Lucy	Derbyshire	✓	✓	
Ella	Leeds		✓	
Holly	Nottingham	✓	✓	
Ruby	Norwich		✓	
		12/19	18/19	1/19



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