



WOLVERHAMPTON SCHOOL OF ART COURSE SUSPENSION RESPONSE

We understand that Wolverhampton School of Art has withdrawn the majority of its undergraduate and postgraduate glass and ceramics courses.

The loss of further opportunities to study glass and ceramics at levels 5-7 will create barriers for many young people in accessing creative careers. As more practice-based degree courses are removed, the opportunity to specialise is disappearing. The move will result in very few opportunities to study these subjects at undergraduate and postgraduate level in the UK. It will also undermine the role of higher education in offering focused 3D experience of materials and kiln technologies that contribute to careers in engineering, manufacturing and other creative industries.

We know access to higher education is needed at a local level. Taking away this provision will contribute to a gradual erosion of facilities, excluding many young people who do not have access to affordable transport. These are students who are already facing a limited start to their creative careers due to not having had the opportunity to experience a full and varied arts education at school. Having access to an undergraduate arts education can be a transformative experience for young people from all backgrounds.

With growing interest and government support of vocational courses, it is the wrong decision to remove these courses from the Wolverhampton core offer, at a time when the alternative routes into craft careers called for by Crafts Council have yet to prove themselves at this level.

A creative career should be an accessible option to everyone – ensuring our creative workforce represents all communities is fundamental. Our craft skills sector alone contributes £3.4 billion to the UK economy and industry leaders from all sectors recognise the importance of creative skills in their workforce.

Research from the Creative Industries Policy and Evidence Centre, written in partnership with Nesta, tells us that, *“Creativity is likely to become even more important in the future job market. Although it may seem ubiquitous, far from every job advert lists ‘creativity’ as a requirement. In fact, job adverts for the DCMS Creative Occupations official list are still far more likely to ask for it. Strikingly, jobs asking for creativity are also much more likely to grow as a percentage of the workforce by the year 2030. This reinforces the finding from previous research that policymakers should be investing in the workforce’s creative skills”.*

The closure of these risks severing ties for established routes into employment and jeopardises the sustainability of regional creative businesses.

Crafts Council
May 2022

Notes

1. <https://www.pec.ac.uk/news/new-research-shows-creativity-will-become-even-more-important-to-the-growth-of-jobs-between-now-and-2030>