

CHEAD

Council for Higher Education in Art & Design

CHEAD / ACE research on widening participation in HE art and design: overview and ways forward

Commissioned by the
Council for Higher Education in Art and Design (CHEAD)
and the Arts Council England

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1. Background

1.1. CHEAD/ACE research

This over-arching report is part of the research commissioned by the Council for Higher Education in Art and Design (CHEAD) and the Arts Council England (ACE) on widening participation in Higher Education (HE) Art and Design. The CHEAD/ACE research consists of:

- A literature review of the evidence on widening participation, relevant to HE Art and Design (Hudson, 2005a).
- An analysis of University Central Admissions Service (UCAS) statistics on HE Art and Design (Hudson and Sutherland, 2006).
- A report on a questionnaire administered to HE Art and Design institutions and departments belonging to CHEAD (Hudson, 2005b).
- A report on the qualitative strand of the CHEAD/ACE research (Hudson and Jamieson, 2006).
- A literature review on black and minority ethnic (BME) students and HE Art and Design, separately commissioned by the ACE (Malik-Okon, 2006).
- An over-arching project report.

The research therefore spans large-scale quantitative and micro-level qualitative evidence. The Higher Education Funding Council for England (HEFCE) has commented that the CHEAD/ ACE research is the first subject-specific research in England on widening participation in HE (Whitston, 2005).

1.2 Scope of this report

This over-arching report presents:

- Relevant background information about the CHEAD/ ACE research (Section 1).
- Relevant methodological information and key findings for each strand of the CHEAD/ ACE research listed above (Sections 2-5).
- An analysis of the ways in which findings across different strands of the research inter-relate (Section 6).
- Recommendations arising from the research for research, policy and practice in HE Art and Design (Section 7).

For more detail about the methodology and findings of the individual strands of the CHEAD/ACE research, the reader is directed to the reports above.

1.3 Definitions

1.3.1 Widening participation

The definition of widening participation used in the CHEAD/ACE research is when all individuals have equal opportunities to participate in education and to achieve, regardless of particular circumstances, such as:

- Socio-economic status (SES).
- Age (mature students).
- Ethnicity (British nationals).
- Ethnicity (foreign students).
- Gender.
- Physical and sensory disabilities.
- Mental health.
- Learning difficulties and disabilities (LDD), including dyslexia.
- Sexuality.

1.3.2 Research

In the CHEAD/ACE research, research is defined as evidence which has been systematically collected, analysed and reported. In reporting findings systematically, the reader is given

appropriate methodological information on which to judge the credibility of claims made and the extent to and ways in which findings would be replicable in wider contexts.

1.3.3 Developmental activity

In the CHEAD/ACE research, developmental activity consists of initiatives which aim primarily to develop practice in an identified area of widening participation, rather than to build evidence systematically on an identified area.

2. Review of the literature

2.1 Overview

This section focuses on the CHEAD/ACE review of literature relevant to widening participation in HE Art and Design (Hudson, 2005a) and refers to Malik-Okon (2006) in relation to ethnicity.

2.2 Methods

A search was conducted of academic data bases and of websites.

2.3 Key findings

2.3.1 History

Widening participation in HE is by no means new, and can be traced back to at least the mid 1800s.

2.3.2 Policy focus

The New Labour government's target that 50% of 18-30 year olds should be participating in HE by 2010, combined with legislation such as the Disability Discrimination Act (DDA) (1995), the Special Educational Needs and Disability Act (SENDA) (2001) and the 2000 amendments to the Race Relations Act create, in principle, powerful drivers to widen HE participation. Evidence (HEFCE, 2005a) suggests, however, that the increase in the participation rate has slowed since New Labour came to power.

2.3.3 Research on Art and Design

Gaps

On the whole, there is a lack of research and research and development activity on widening participation, specific to HE Art and Design. There has been a wide range of creative developmental projects in relation to widening participation in HE Art and Design. Some developmental projects have included a research focus. Overall, because evidence has not tended to be systematically collected, analysed and reported, it is difficult to assess the extent to and ways in which much activity in HE Art and Design reports might be replicated in other contexts.

Work conducted prior to the CHEAD/ ACE research principally, but not exclusively, focused on the pre-application and acceptance stages (e.g. McManus, 2003; Bambridge et al., 2003; University of the Arts London, 2003a, b). One significant developmental project on the student experience was an initiative by the University of Worcester on mental health (Chapman, 2002). Case studies from a developmental project on formative evaluation, reported through the Higher Education Academy (HEA) website (e.g. Cowan, 2004), suggest there are HE Art and Design projects which are relevant to, though not specifically about, widening participation.

There is a lack of research on the literacy demands (reading, writing and speaking and listening) of HE Art and Design. This includes the extent to and ways in which first, students whose backgrounds represent a range of widening participation issues (e.g. LDD including dyslexia and English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) students) negotiate literacy demands and second, staff mediate these demands.

Malik –Okon (2006) argues that there is scant evidence on the experience of minority ethnic students in HE Art and Design, though there is a considerable body of literature on minority ethnic students in HE.

2.3.4 Website review

The review of HE Art and Design websites took place at the beginning of 2005. It is likely that websites will have been updated since then.

At the time of conducting the website review, it is fair to say that, on the whole, website information about widening participation could have been presented more comprehensively, coherently and accessibly for staff and for students. On the whole, policies relating to widening participation were particularly inaccessible.

2.3.5 Research beyond HE Art and Design

Overview

Given the policy focus on widening participation in HE, it is unsurprising that there is a range of relevant recent and current research. This includes a review of the literature on barriers to HE (University of York et al., 2006), published since the CHEAD/ ACE literature review; a series of research projects commissioned by the Economic and Social Research Council (ESRC) Teaching and Learning Research Programme (TLRP) (<http://www.tlrp.org>) and HEFCE studies (e.g. Powney, 2002; HEFCE, 2005a, b).

Good practice

Powney (2002) identified good practice in relation to widening participation in HE. Good practice included raising staff awareness of widening participation strategies; commissioning research and using research findings to plan widening participation activity; using student feedback to develop approaches to widening participation; altering recruitment, assessment and curriculum processes; and ensuring that professional development is mandatory.

Theoretical approaches

A range of theoretical models has been used in existing research. These include:

- The concept of barriers, as made problematic in, for instance, HEFCE (2004) and University of York et al. (2006).
- The student life-cycle model (e.g. Schuetze and Slowey, 2002). This can enable research, policy and practice to focus on all stages of the student experience, from pre-application to post-graduation.
- The role of identity in shaping HE choices (e.g. Crossan et al., 2000).

Unstrategic approach

Powney (2002) underlined that, though Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) had become more proactive about widening participation activity, widening participation activity tended to be insufficiently strategic in terms of planning, implementation, monitoring and evaluation and dissemination.

Professional development

HEFCE (2005b), in an equal opportunities study, found that only one third of respondents had attended equal opportunities training. Those accessing this training were more likely to be academics and managers, who were male, full time and permanent staff.

Quality of the evidence

University of York et al. (2006) underlines that there is a range of methodological issues with existing research, including:

- A lack of studies using rigorous methods.
- An absence of appropriate outcome measures to evaluate the impact of widening participation activities.
- A focus on action, not research, in studies which claim to be action research.

Gaps in the evidence

According to University of York et al. (2006), at the time of their analyses, there was an absence of evidence on:

- Widening participation in relation to individual HE subjects.
- Non-participation and non-completion.
- Specific groups such as looked-after children and part-time students.
- How early life experience influences HE choices.

3. Analysis of UCAS statistics

3.1 Methods

UCAS data on HE Art and Design applications and accepted applicants 2002-04 were analysed (Hudson and Sutherland, 2006).

In interpreting these quantitative findings, the reader must bear in mind that:

- Data on the applications stage are about the number of applications, not individual applicants. Data on the acceptance stage are, in contrast, about the number of accepted applicants.
- There is a large amount of missing data in the UCAS data set. In some places, up to 38% of the data are missing. This means that findings should be interpreted with caution.
- UCAS data sets contain information only about applications made via UCAS.

3.2 Key findings

3.2.1 Overall

Overall, there were clear patterns in the UCAS data set. On the whole, trends were broadly similar across applications and accepted applicants, across Creative Arts and Design as a whole and within individual subjects, and across Scottish and English/Welsh data. Overall, in terms of applications and accepted applicants, Creative Arts and Design 2002-04 was largely female, White, under 21 and from the lower and upper managerial and professional SES groups. The majority of applications and accepted applicants came via Route A (the additional application route for some Art and Design courses) and from the Further Education (FE)/HE sector.

The rest of Section 3 focuses on accepted applicants.

3.2.2 Accepted applicants across Creative Arts and Design subjects

Number of accepted applicants

The number of accepted applicants in Creative Arts and Design subjects increased, from 37,533 in 2002 to 41,112 in 2004.

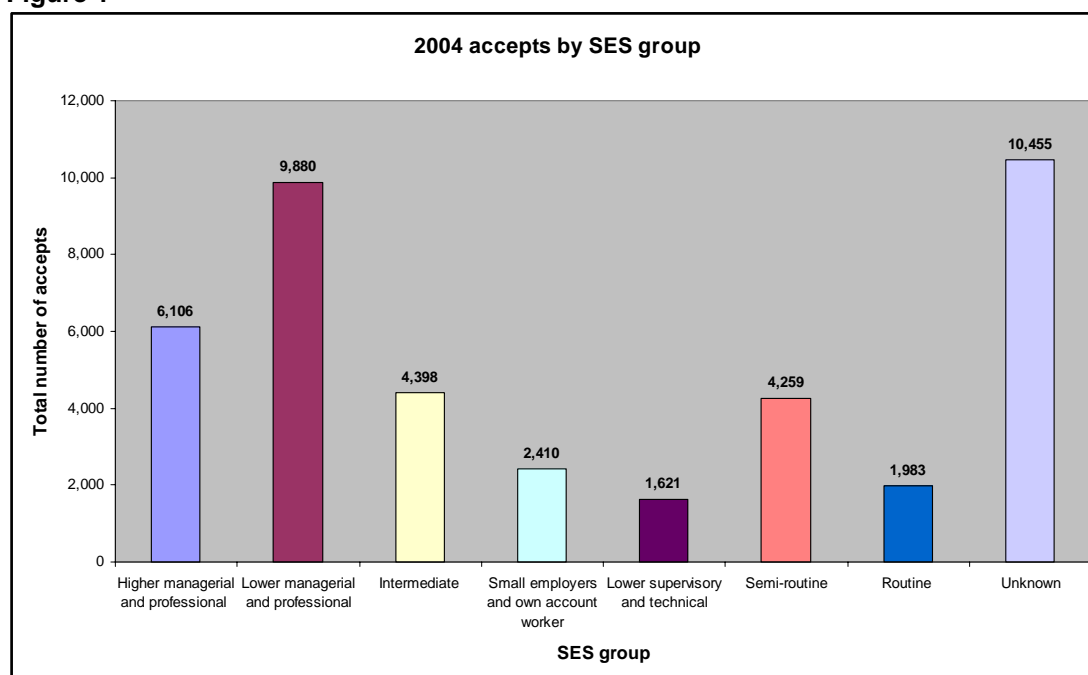
Gender

There were more female than male accepted applicants. In 2004, 25,121 women were accepted for Creative Arts and Design places, in comparison with 15,991 men.

Social and Economic Status

UCAS uses the Standard Occupational Classification 2000. SES is based on an applicant's parental occupation or, if an applicant is over 21, the occupation of the person contributing the highest income to the household. SES categories are illustrated in Figure 1 below. Figure 1 shows that, in 2004, the largest category was accepted applicants whose SES group was unknown (n = 10,455). The second largest category was individuals from the lower managerial and professional SES group (n = 9,880), followed by accepted applicants in the higher managerial and professional SES group (n = 6,106). The smallest group of accepted applicants was the lower supervisory and technical SES group (n = 1,621).

Figure 1



Ethnic group

The large majority of accepted applicants reported their ethnic group as White (n = 31,052 in 2004). The second largest group was those whose ethnicity was unknown (n = 9,584 in 2004). In contrast, numbers of accepted applicants reporting they were Black (n = 1,070 in 2004), Asian (n = 1,413 in 2004) and Mixed Race (n = 933 in 2004) were small.

Age group

Across 2002-04, the number of accepted applicants in all age groups rose. The large majority of accepted applicants was in the under 21 age group (n = 30,526 in 2004), followed by the 21-24 age group (n = 6,039 in 2004). The 25 and over age group contained the smallest number of accepted applicants (n = 4,547 in 2004).

Domain

The number of Home, European Union (EU) and Overseas (OS) accepted applicants rose between 2002 and 2004. The largest category was Home accepted applicants. There were more OS than EU accepted applicants. In 2004, there were 37,978 Home, 1,470 EU and 1,664 OS accepted applicants.

Previous educational establishment

The large majority of accepted applicants came from the FE/ HE sector (n = 23,892 in 2004). The second largest group was those whose previous educational establishment was unknown (n = 8,115 in 2004). In 2004, there were 7,427 accepted applicants from the maintained sector, compared with 1,477 from the independent sector.

Route A and B

More accepted applicants came via Route A than Route B. In 2004, 24,059 accepted applicants came through Route A, compared with 17,053 through Route B.

Previous educational experience

The largest group of accepted applicants had attended the Foundation Diploma (n = 10,716 in 2004), followed by Lower BTEC (Business Technical and Enterprise Council) (n = 7,335 in 2004), Higher BTEC (n = 1,504 in 2004) and Access courses (n = 972 in 2004). Only a small number of 2004 accepted applicants had attended GNVQ (General National Vocational Qualification) courses (n = 230).

3.2.3 Subject-specific analysis of accepted applicants

Subjects

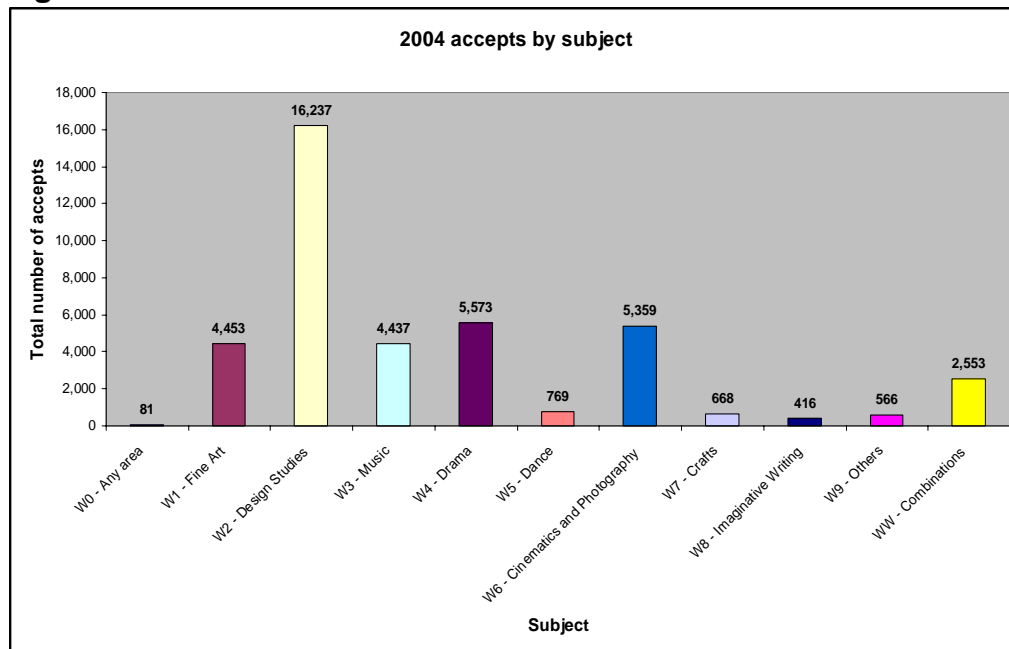
Within Creative Arts and Design, the subjects of most interest to the CHEAD are:

- Creative Art and Design: any area.
- Fine Art.
- Design Studies.
- Cinematics and Photography.
- Crafts.
- Others in Creative Arts and Design.
- Combinations within Creative Art and Design.

Number of accepted applicants in individual subjects

Figure 2 shows that in 2004, of those subjects of most relevance to CHEAD, the subject with the largest number of accepted applicants was Design Studies (n = 16,237), followed by Cinematics and Photography (n = 5,359) and Fine Art (n = 4,453). Creative Art and Design: any area had the smallest number of accepted applicants (n = 81).

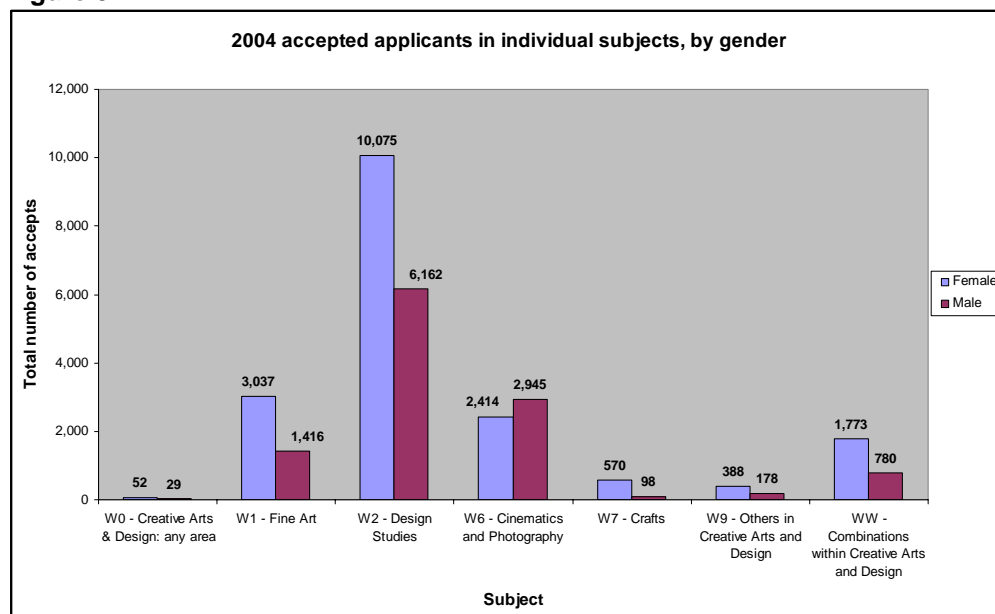
Figure 2



Accepted applicants in individual subjects and gender

Figure 3 shows that in 2004, in all subjects except for Cinematics and Photography, there were more female than male accepted applicants. For example, in Design Studies in 2004, 10,075 accepted applicants were female and 6,162 were male. In Cinematics and Photography, in contrast, 2,945 accepted applicants were male and 2,414 were female.

Figure 3



Accepted applicants in individual subjects and age group

In every subject in 2004, the largest number of accepted applicants was in the under 21 age group. For example, in Design Studies there were 12,020 accepted applicants who were under 21, in comparison with 2,604 between 21 and 24, and 1,605 who were 25 or above. In Fine Art, Crafts, and Creative Arts and Design: any area, there were more accepted applicants who were 25 or over, than in the 21 to 24 age group.

Accepted applicants in individual subjects and SES group

In 2004, in all individual subjects, the largest category was those whose SES group was unknown. In all subjects except for Combinations, the SES group with the second largest number of accepted applicants was lower managerial and professional occupations. In all subjects except for Creative Arts and Design: any area, the third largest group of accepted applicants reported belonging to the higher managerial and professional SES group. For example, of accepted applicants to Cinematics and Photography in 2004, the SES group of 1,478 was unknown. 1,195 were from the lower managerial and professional and 752 from the higher managerial and professional SES groups.

Accepted applicants in individual subjects and ethnic group

In all subjects in 2004, the largest category of accepted applicants was those who reported their ethnic group as White. The second largest category was accepted applicants whose ethnic group was unknown. The number of accepted applicants who self-reported as Asian, Black and Mixed Race was very small in comparison with those self-reporting as White. For example, of accepted applicants to Fine Art in 2004, 3,483 reported that they were White, whilst the ethnic group of 723 was unknown. In contrast, 97 accepted applicants reported that they were Asian, 80 Mixed Race and 44 Black.

4. Questionnaire to CHEAD members

4.1 Overview

A questionnaire on widening participation was sent to the 79 HE institutions which were CHEAD members in 2004-05. The CHEAD/ACE questionnaire report (Hudson, 2005b) covers widening participation in HE Art and Design in relation to:

- Policies and strategies.
- Staff development.
- Barriers for applicants and students.
- Support for applicants and students.
- Assessment.
- Curriculum.
- Teaching and learning.

The CHEAD questionnaire is the first research which aims to gain an overview of reported patterns of activity in relation to widening participation in HE Art and Design.

4.2 Sample

After a series of follow ups, 51 out of 79 completed questionnaires were received (65% response rate). This is a good response rate. In reporting the data, the total sample size (N) has been taken as 51. However, in interpreting findings, the reader must bear in mind that 28 institutions/ departments did not return the questionnaire. The majority of questionnaires were completed by senior managers.

4.3 Key findings

4.3.1 Number of staff

Just under half (n = 25: 49%) of the institutions/ departments responding to the questionnaire had under 100 Art and Design staff; just under a quarter (n = 12: 24%) had between 100 and 199 Art and Design staff; and under a fifth (n = 9: 18%) had 200 or more staff. A tenth (n = 5:10%) of respondents did not answer the question.

Just under two fifths (n = 20: 39%) of the sample had between one and 49 visiting lecturers; just over a quarter (n = 14: 26%) had between 50 and 99 visiting lecturers; four (8%) had between 100 and 149; three (6%) had between 150 and 199 and just under a fifth (n = 9: 18%) had 200 or more hourly paid visiting lecturers.

The number of staff carries implications for professional development on widening participation. For example, it may be more challenging to provide a range of professional development programmes on widening participation, tailored to different groups of staff, in a small institution/ department than in a larger one. Conversely, ensuring all staff, including hourly paid visiting lecturers, are appropriately informed of, for instance, policy in relation to widening participation may be particularly problematic in a large institution/ department.

4.3.2 Professional development

100% (n = 51) of respondents said that academic staff in their institution had received professional development on widening participation in the past two years. However, this does not mean that all Art and Design academic staff within CHEAD institutions had received the professional development. 42 (84%) said that administrative staff and 40 (83%) said that technical staff had received professional development on inclusion.

4.3.3 Policies and strategies

Figure 4

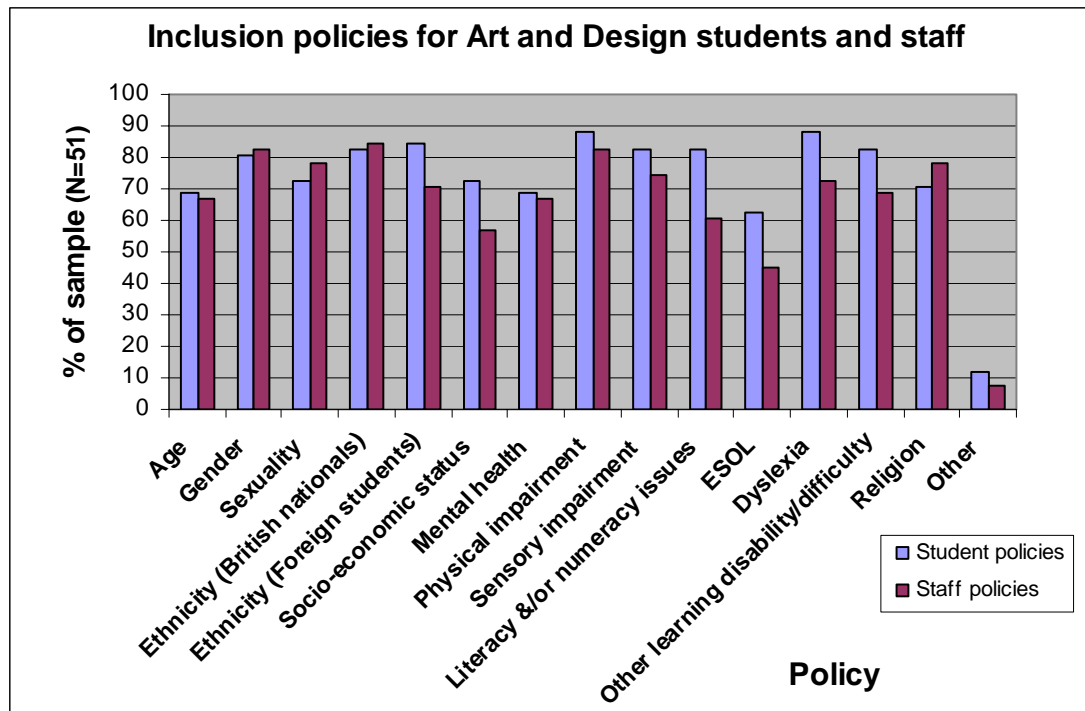


Figure 4 illustrates that over half of all respondents indicated that there were institutional policies covering all aspects of widening participation above, for staff and students, except for a staff policy for ESOL. The relatively high proportion of respondents reporting policies which encompassed physical and sensory disabilities, LDD, dyslexia, literacy and numeracy and ethnicity may reflect the impact of the DDA, SENDA and the Race Relations (Amendment) Act. Just under 70% reported that policies covered student mental health. The existence of policies does not mean that they are implemented systematically.

4.3.4 Aimhigher

Over three quarters of respondents (n=39: 77%) reported that their institution had been involved in Aimhigher.

4.3.5 Barriers

Figures 5 and 6 report the three most commonly rated barriers for applicants and students at their institution.

Figure 5

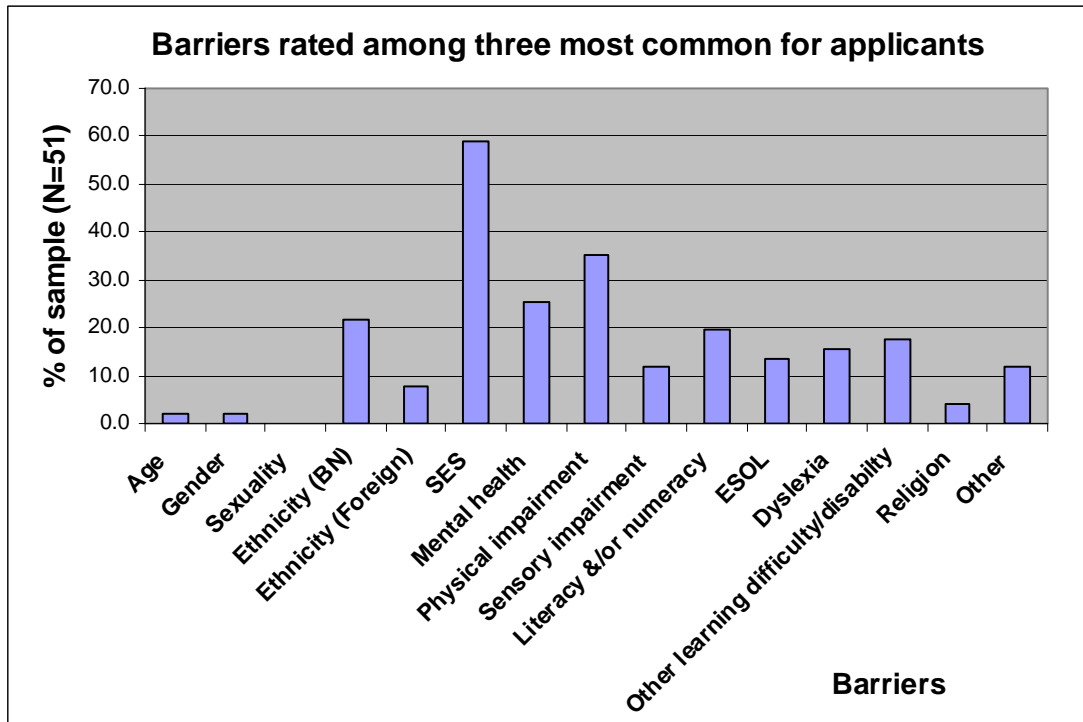
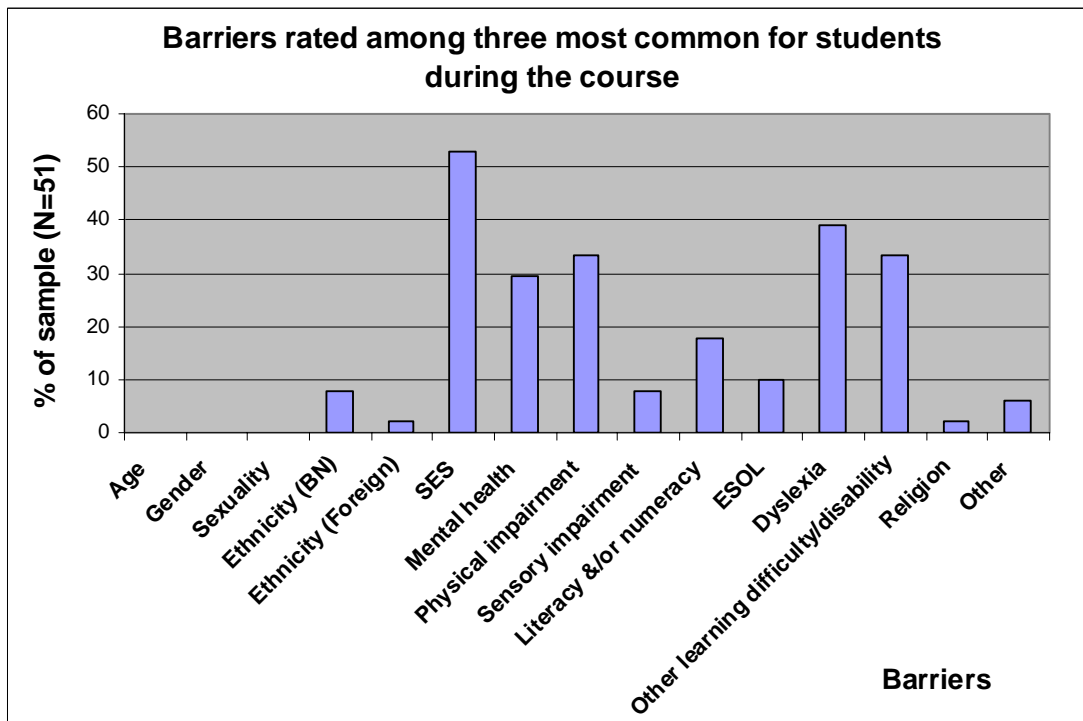


Figure 6



The largest group of respondents perceived that SES was the most common barrier for applicants and for students. Other more frequently listed barriers for applicants were physical impairment (n = 18: 35%) and mental health (n = 13: 26%). Other more frequently listed

barriers for students were dyslexia (n = 20: 49%), other learning difficulties or disabilities (n = 17: 33%), physical impairment (n = 17: 33%) and mental health (n = 15: 29%).

It is interesting that only one respondent (2%), in each case, thought that age and gender were among the three most common barriers for applicants and no respondents thought that age and gender were amongst the three most common barriers for students. Only a minority of respondents thought that ethnicity was among the three most common barriers and a higher percentage of respondents thought that ethnicity was a barrier for applicants than was the case for students.

4.3.6 Support for students

The majority of respondents indicated that a wide range of support relevant to widening participation was available for students in their institution, as follows:

- Guidance from academic staff (n = 51 respondents: 100%).
- Dyslexia support (n = 50: 98%).
- Dyslexia assessment (n = 49: 96%).
- Pastoral support (n = 49: 96%).
- Professional counselling (n = 49: 96%).
- Study skills (n = 48: 94%).
- Information Communications Technology (ICT) support (n = 46: 90%).
- Literacy and/or numeracy support (n = 45: 88%).
- Financial support (n = 45: 88%).
- Literacy and/or numeracy assessment (n = 44: 86%).
- Other learning difficulty/disability support (n = 44: 86%).
- Support for physical impairment (n = 43: 84%).
- Other mental health support, as well as counselling (n = 43: 84%).

This does not mean that all students who needed support received it.

4.3.7 Assessment, curriculum and teaching and learning

Overview

The majority of respondents thought that assessment practices, the curriculum and teaching and learning strategies had diversified to reflect widening participation issues, in the five years prior to completing the questionnaire.

Assessment

Nearly three quarters (n = 37: 73%) of respondents thought that assessment processes in Art and Design had diversified. Allowing extra time was the most commonly (n = 41: 80%) reported way in which assessment procedures had diversified. Nearly three quarters of respondents (n = 37: 73%) reported that formative assessment was used, whilst just over three fifths (n = 31: 61%) reported the use of continuous assessment. Just over half said studio work (n = 27: 53%) was used, whilst just under half (n = 25: 49%) said an amanuensis (scribe) was used. 19 (37%) respondents highlighted use of an interpreter, whilst 12 (24%) identified the separation of theory and practice.

Respondents highlighted additional examples of ways in which assessment had diversified. Examples included:

- Credit and unitised frameworks for undergraduate and postgraduate courses.
- More use of extenuating circumstances.
- Presentations to replace or complement some written assessments.
- Increased use of self and peer assessment, particularly in formative assessment.
- Practice-based methods to assess theory.

The curriculum

Over three quarters (n = 39: 77%) of respondents thought that there had been an increase in the variety of Art and Design programmes. A large majority (n = 45: 88%) of respondents thought that the curriculum content had altered to reflect inclusion issues. Respondents were asked to give examples of ways in which the curriculum had diversified. These included:

- Broader cultural references.
- Encouraging students to draw on their life experience in their work.
- Annual changes to the course, to reflect widening participation issues.
- Introducing modules on women's studies, gender, identity and social issues.
- Introducing study skills modules.

Teaching and learning strategies

In terms of teaching and learning strategies, 48 (94%) respondents reported that reflective learning and 47 (92%) respondents reported that student-led seminars were used to address diversity issues. Four fifths (n = 41: 80%) of respondents said that different learning styles were used. Interestingly, only just over two fifths (n = 21: 41%) reported that open/ distance learning was used.

Respondents were asked to specify additional teaching and learning approaches used to address inclusion. These included:

- Blended learning (e.g. virtual learning supplementing conventional delivery).
- Visual thinking techniques for dyslexic students.
- Part time and full time study.
- More group activity (e.g. group critiques and team projects).
- Acknowledgement of a range of creative intelligences.

Responses to the questionnaire therefore suggest that there is a considerable amount of creative activity in relation to assessment, the curriculum and teaching and learning which it would seem important to research in more detail.

5. Qualitative strand

5.1 Methods

The qualitative strand of the CHEAD/ ACE research explored in detail the perceptions of staff and students of widening participation issues. Fieldwork was conducted in four institutions:

- Kent Institute of Art and Design (now part of the University College for the Creative Arts).
- Manchester Metropolitan University (MMU).
- Surrey Institute of Art and Design (now part of the University College for the Creative Arts).
- University of Worcester.

These institutions were selected because they contrast with one another in a range of ways. For example, MMU is a large, urban university, Worcester is a much smaller HE institution, whilst Kent and Surrey are specialist Art and Design institutions. In-depth, semi-structured, audio-recorded interviews and focus groups were conducted. In total, 66 interviews and focus groups were conducted. 40 interviews were conducted with staff, and 20 interviews and six focus groups with students. Following guidance from CHEAD, students who reflected a range of widening participation issues were invited to participate in the research. Students spanned first years to post-graduates.

5.2 Findings

5.2.1 Overall

Overall, findings underline the range and complexity of widening participation issues, and the challenges and opportunities for institutions in addressing them. Some staff were explicit that the widening participation agenda is growing and that their institution was not well equipped to manage this growth. A small number of staff questioned what the limits of HEIs' roles should be in relation to widening participation.

5.2.2 Students and widening participation

Individual students in this research tended to experience a range of widening participation issues. For example, one student, Paul, who was a mature student from a lower SES group, had physical disabilities, LDD and mental health issues. Whilst there were commonalities in students' responses to widening participation issues, there were also differences. For instance, some students had developed a range of strategies to help themselves start and progress in HE Art and Design. Strategies included drawing on their intrinsic motivation, particularly when dealing with challenges; using networks of family and friends, within and beyond HE, for practical and emotional support; and, where appropriate, learning to distance themselves from family members hostile to HE. This underlines that students can be proactive in addressing widening participation issues.

The complexities in student experience of and responses to widening participation issues underline the importance of not adopting a 'one size fits all' approach to addressing widening participation.

5.2.3 Range of widening participation activity

Within each institution, there was a wide range of widening participation activity, for potential and current students. This included, for example, summer schools and taster days for school and FE students; support with portfolio and interview preparation for applicants; and support ranging from counselling services to study skills for students. However, the majority of staff did not have an overview of the range of widening participation activity on offer. To address this issue, a researcher has been appointed in MMU, to conduct an audit of widening participation activity.

5.2.4 Evaluation evidence

There was an absence of evaluation evidence on the impact of widening participation activities. Without any evidence, it is impossible to know whether aims are being achieved and therefore whether it is worthwhile continuing the activity.

5.2.5 SES and ethnicity

Students talked about SES in terms of support for and values about HE Art and Design and finances. The accounts of some students from lower SES groups, including some minority ethnic students from lower SES groups, revealed a lack of family support, academic, practical and/or emotional, for HE and/or Art and Design. Some students from lower SES groups indicated that financial considerations had influenced their decision-making about HEIs. At the same time, some students made problematic simplistic conceptions of SES and HE. For example, the vast majority of students, not just those from lower SES groups, expressed financial concerns.

5.2.6 Gender

Neither staff nor student accounts focused on issues related to gender and HE Art and Design.

5.2.7 Mature students

Mature students interviewed appeared very determined to succeed in HE. This appeared to be related to prior negative educational, work or personal experience and to a wish to prove themselves. Previous work experience had also equipped some students with valuable skills for HE such as time management. Some mature students had complex lives which necessitated considerable juggling to manage the demands of HE. At the same time, it must be remembered that some students who progress straight from college or school to HE also have demanding lives.

5.2.8 Disability support

On the whole, students were positive about the support for LDD, dyslexia and physical and sensory disabilities available in HE, through the DDA, SENDA and the DSA. Students said that they received more support for disabilities at HE than they had experienced prior to HE. Any criticism related principally to a delay at the start of HE in putting support in place. This is a point at which students particularly need support, to make the transition to HE smoothly. Some students also thought that there was scope to improve how disability support was

advertised. Activities specific to Art and Design, such as visiting galleries, could pose issues for some students with disabilities.

5.2.9 Mental health

The qualitative research underlined that mental health is often challenging for staff to address, in terms of the complexity of mental health issues and the apparent increase in the number of mental health cases. Existing resources to address mental health issues appeared to be stretched.

Whilst all four institutions had an infrastructure to address mental health issues, Worcester had a particular focus on mental health. Worcester, for example:

- Ran an annual competition to design postcards about mental health, to raise student and staff awareness.
- Had two mental health workers seconded from the National Health Service (NHS), as well as university counsellors.
- Had structured the criteria for Art and Design assessments and the curriculum, to clarify to students the distinction between using personal experience to enhance the quality of HE Art and Design practice, and using personal experience in HE Art work primarily as catharsis.

At Worcester, students and staff talked with apparent openness about mental health issues. Furthermore, a wide range of staff was aware of the range of mental health activity. Worcester's work on mental health illustrates the scope for proactive, wide-ranging development of good practice. This, when set against challenges reported by staff, underlines that it is both feasible and important to focus in greater detail on mental health and HE Art and Design.

5.2.10 Over-arching themes

Overview

Some themes recurred across students' accounts, transcending specific aspects of widening participation.

Personal experience

Some students' accounts stressed that they drew on personal experience in their Art and Design practice. Personal experience spanned different areas of widening participation, such as disability, ethnicity and mental health. At the 2005 CHEAD widening participation conference, Sir Michael Bichard made the point that diversity is key to Art and Design. The potential to use personal experience in a structured way in Art and Design, as at the University of Worcester, underlines that the widening participation agenda can indeed bring advantages to Art and Design, in terms of increasing creative diversity. There is probably scope to increase the extent to which students use their experience of widening participation, within a structured framework, to enhance the creative diversity of HE Art and Design.

Teachers and lecturers

Students' accounts revealed the potentially powerful influences, negative and positive, of Art and Design teachers at school level and FE and HE lecturers.

Some students repeated principally negative recollections of what school teachers had said to them years previously, about their Art and Design. Students greatly valued the support, academic, personal and procedural (in terms of directing to relevant support services) provided by some Art and Design staff. Data revealed that even brief interactions with teachers and lecturers could influence students' decision making about and experience of HE Art and Design.

Lack of confidence

A surprising number of students highlighted a lack of confidence about HE Art and Design. Students talked about a lack of confidence in relation to different stages of the student life-cycle: applying for Art and Design, starting an Art and Design course, their Art and Design practice whilst at HE, and/or their plans for post graduation. At the same time, some students identified that their confidence about Art and Design had developed, over the course of their

HE experience. Findings about confidence have implications for how staff interact with students, at all stages of the student life-cycle.

Literacy demands

The vast majority of students, not just those with LDD or ESOL students, expressed concerns about the literacy demands of Art and Design, in terms of the language of Art and Design and the challenges of writing in different genres. Institutions had a range of support for literacy issues. One institution's student handbook for Art and Design included a focus on the requirements of different types of written assignment. In one institution, students had responded very positively to the generic and subject specific literacy support provided by the study skills tutor, on a group and individual basis.

Finance

The large majority of students expressed concern about finances. This included EU and Overseas as well as Home students. Some students commented on costs specific to HE Art and Design, such as materials and gallery visits. Some students were explicit that information about finances was not sufficiently straightforward to be intelligible.

5.2.11 Professional development

Across the four institutions, there was a range of professional development which spanned, for instance, mental health and LDD. It is probably fair to say that, on the whole, professional development did not target systematically all relevant aspects of widening participation or all relevant staff.

5.2.12 Differences between staff and student accounts

There were differences between staff and student accounts of widening participation. For example, the majority of students focused more on the literacy demands of Art and Design than many staff tended to. Whilst students tended to reveal the influences, negative and positive, of teachers and lecturers, on the whole, staff accounts placed greater emphasis on institutional procedures to address widening participation issues. This suggests that some staff may under-estimate their impact upon students' decision making about and experience of HE Art and Design.

5.2.13 The student voice

On the whole, students were very willing to talk to the researchers. Detailed student case studies are integral to the CHEAD/ ACE qualitative research. To give an example of a student voice, a brief extract from Laretta's interview has been cited below. Laretta is a minority ethnic, single parent, mature student:

In my culture it (Art and Design) is not considered a job... It is a job like doctors, solicitors, lawyers, they are considered the really good jobs. When I have gone to college and done Art, I tell my family and it is like, 'Oh well, that is not a real degree.' Do you know what I mean? I have had to come across that ... I basically got, they are looking at it as a hobby, not as a career. They are like, 'That is nice. What are you going to do next?'... It was kind of disappointing, because they didn't look on what I was doing as important.

Contrasts in staff and student accounts, as exemplified in Section 5.2.12, suggest that there is scope to disseminate the student case studies, to develop staff awareness of students' views.

6. Implications

6.1 Overview

This section brings together, where appropriate, findings from across the different strands of the CHEAD/ ACE research. The section triangulates (i.e. compares data on the same aspect of widening participation, collected through different methods, such as through the literature review and the analysis of UCAS statistics) findings across the different strands of the

research. The section covers only those findings which inter-relate with findings from other strands of the research.

6.2 Policy and practice

The different strands of the CHEAD/ ACE research together underline the scale and complexity of widening participation issues. These present both opportunities and challenges for policy and practice on widening participation in HE Art and Design.

6.3 Research and evaluation evidence

The CHEAD/ ACE literature review highlights that, within and beyond HE Art and Design, there is an absence of high-quality research evidence on widening participation and, furthermore, a lack of monitoring and evaluation evidence on the impact of widening participation activity. The CHEAD/ACE qualitative research reveals that many staff do not have an overview of widening participation activity in their institution; this may create unnecessary difficulties in referring students to appropriate support services. The CHEAD/ ACE literature review, questionnaire report and qualitative research together underline that there is a wide range of often very creative activity in relation to widening participation in HE Art and Design. To ensure that the potential impact of widening participation activity is maximised, it is crucial that evidence is systematically collected, analysed and reported. This would enable institutions to use resources, in terms of funding and staff time, effectively. Wider Art and Design stakeholders, beyond the institution in which an initiative has taken place, would then be able to make informed judgements about whether to implement an initiative in their context and, if so, what adaptations, if any, they should make to the initiative in question.

To develop its research on widening participation, the CHEAD has commissioned a further set of UCAS statistics for 2004-05. Some institutions, such as Chelsea College of Art and Design, have analysed institutional and neighbourhood data in the broader context of the 2002-04 CHEAD/ACE statistics. Similar work could be undertaken by other Art and Design institutions/ departments. Research commissioned by the National Arts Learning Network (NALN) (Hudson, 2006 onwards) is tracking selected students from vocational backgrounds into and through three HE Art and Design institutions. This research is building on the student views expressed in the CHEAD/ ACE research, by accessing students' perceptions in depth over time. Given that the CHEAD/ACE research has spanned a wide range of different aspects of widening participation, there is scope to commission future research which builds on selected aspects of the CHEAD/ ACE research and which reflects relevant stakeholders' priorities.

6.4 Assessment, curriculum and teaching and learning

The CHEAD/ACE literature review, questionnaire and qualitative research all present evidence that Art and Design has focused on tailoring assessment procedures, the curriculum and teaching and learning strategies to reflect widening participation issues. This further underlines the importance of collecting evidence on different stages of the student life-cycle rather than focusing, as has largely been the case to date, primarily on pre-acceptance. Furthermore, the range and creativity of activity related to the curriculum, assessment processes and teaching and learning strategies may suggest that practice in these areas in Art and Design is ahead of that of some other subject areas. Research evidence would enable activity in Art and Design to be disseminated where appropriate to other subject areas.

6.5 SES

The analysis of UCAS statistics indicates that, across SES groups, the largest number of applications to and accepted applicants in HE Art and Design are from the higher and lower managerial and professional groups. The CHEAD/ACE questionnaire revealed that the majority of respondents perceived that SES was a barrier for applicants to and students in HE Art and Design. The qualitative research revealed, first, that institutions had a range of initiatives which aimed to increase the number of HE Art and Design students from lower SES groups. Second, some students from lower SES groups perceived that their families' values and priorities were incompatible with those of HE and that financial considerations had helped to shape their choice of HE. These perceptions are affirmed in the literature review. The point that there are synergies in the findings on SES across the different strands of the research

underlines that SES is an issue and reiterates the importance of evaluating institutional initiatives to address SES, to maximise their effectiveness.

6.6 Gender

The UCAS evidence (Hudson and Sutherland, 2006) on the predominance of applications from females to HE Art and Design makes an interesting contrast with the points first, that respondents to the CHEAD questionnaire did not, on the whole, perceive gender to be a barrier for HE Art and Design applicants or students and second that, in the CHEAD/ACE qualitative research, staff and students did not tend to focus on gender issues. This contrast suggests that there is scope to explore further gender issues in relation to HE Art and Design.

6.7 Ethnicity and age

The analysis of UCAS statistics illustrates that the majority of accepted applicants are White and under 21. Data from the CHEAD/ ACE qualitative research reveal that some staff perceive that both minority ethnic students and mature students face a range of challenges. This is underlined by the qualitative student data, as the brief extract from Lauretta's interview (see Section 5.13) points to. On the other hand, the CHEAD/ACE questionnaire illustrates that, on the whole, respondents did not think that ethnicity or age were barriers for applicants to or students at their institutions. It may be the case that the awareness of some staff of the experience of mature and minority ethnic students could be developed. The BME literature review (Malik-Okon, 2006) underlines the importance of collecting further quantitative and qualitative data on BME issues in relation to HE Art and Design.

6.8 Literacy and Art and Design

Staff and student views on literacy issues in Art and Design, as reported in the CHEAD/ACE qualitative research and, in the case of staff, in the questionnaire report, carry a range of implications. First, there is scope to raise staff awareness of the extent to and ways in which the large majority of students, not just ESOL students or students with LDD and dyslexia, perceived that literacy was an issue. Second, there is evidence of promising practice in addressing literacy issues related to HE Art and Design. Third, whilst the large majority of questionnaire respondents reported that literacy support was available in their institution, given the extent to which students in the qualitative research perceived that literacy was an issue, there may be a demand for more staff who can work with students on literacy issues. Fourth, literacy was only one of a number of themes explored in the CHEAD/ ACE research. The literature review underlines that there is a lack of research which focuses on the reading, writing and speaking and listening demands of Art and Design.

6.9 Disability support

Whilst some questionnaire respondents perceived that physical and sensory disabilities, LDD and dyslexia were barriers for applicants and students, the large majority of questionnaire respondents also reported that a range of disability support was available in their institution. The latter point was affirmed in the qualitative research; students who had disabilities were largely positive about the support they received at HE, through the DDA and SENDA. Issues reported by some students were the length of time taken to put support in place at the start of HE and insufficiently effective institutional mechanisms for advertising support.

6.10 Mental health

Some questionnaire respondents reported that mental health was a barrier for applicants and students. Findings from the qualitative work underlined the extent to which staff perceived that addressing mental health needs is challenging. This suggests that there is scope for further exploration of mental health issues.

6.11 Students

The methodological range of the CHEAD/ ACE research enables students' accounts to be contextualised in broader quantitative evidence; the case studies in the qualitative research present individuals' experience of macro trends in the UCAS data. The student case studies and the mismatch between staff and student views highlighted in Section 5.12 underline the importance of listening to the student voice, as an integral part of research, policy and practice on widening participation in Art and Design. The range of strategies, outlined in the CHEAD/ ACE qualitative research, which some students deployed to address challenges

related to widening participation points to these students' active human agency and underlines that students, as well as HE institutions, can take responsibility for managing aspects of widening participation. If the student case studies were disseminated, this might encourage some potential students to apply for HE, by developing their understanding that other individuals have experienced similar issues to themselves. The dissemination of case studies might also provide HE students with some useful strategies to help manage issues related to widening participation.

6.12 Presentation of information about widening participation

There was evidence across some strands of the CHEAD/ACE research that information about widening participation could be presented more clearly. The finding from the literature review that website information about widening participation could, on the whole, be presented more accessibly resonates with evidence from the qualitative research that some students felt that institutional signposting of sources of financial information and disability support was unclear, and that financial information was difficult to understand.

6.13 Professional development

Findings from the CHEAD/ACE literature review, questionnaire report and qualitative research raise questions about the scope of existing professional development on widening participation, the extent to which it is systematically available to all relevant staff and staff knowledge about existing institutional widening participation activity.

7. Recommendations

7.1 Overview

- This section presents recommendations arising from the findings reported in Sections 2-6.
- Recommendations should be taken forward by the CHEAD at national level and by individual HEIs at local level.

7.2. Policy and practice

- The development of policy and practice on widening participation in HE Art and Design, at national and local level, should draw on the CHEAD/ACE research and on other relevant quantitative and qualitative evidence.
- Policy and practice on widening participation in HE Art and Design should be carefully targeted to the context of individual institutions.
- Policy and practice on widening participation in HE Art and Design should be sufficiently flexible to be targeted to the needs of individual students, as appropriate.

7.3 Research and evaluation evidence

- Findings from the CHEAD/ ACE research should be disseminated.
- Further quantitative and qualitative research on widening participation in HE Art and Design should be commissioned.
- Stakeholders should select, from the wide-ranging aspects of widening participation covered in the CHEAD/ACE research, areas for further, more detailed research. Areas which stakeholders should consider conducting further research on should include:
 - Widening participation in relation to students' experience of different aspects of the curriculum, assessment processes and teaching and learning strategies.
 - Mental health issues in HE Art and Design.
 - The experience, across the student life-cycle, of students from lower SES groups of HE Art and Design.
 - Minority ethnic students' experience, across the student life-cycle, of HE Art and Design.
 - Mature students' experience, across the student life-cycle, of HE Art and Design.

- Disability issues in relation to HE Art and Design.
- The reading, writing and speaking and listening demands of HE Art and Design and strategies to mediate these demands.
- Developmental projects on widening participation in HE Art and Design should be evaluated.
- HE Art and Design institutions/ departments should map their widening participation activity.
- Statistics on widening participation in HE Art and Design should be commissioned from the UCAS and other relevant organisations on a regular basis. Trends over time should be analysed.
- Individual institutions should combine use of the CHEAD/ACE findings with their own locally commissioned research and evaluation evidence, to inform approaches to widening participation.
- Research and evaluation evidence should be disseminated.

7.4 Gender

- The following should be explored:
 - Whether it would be desirable and/or feasible to increase the number of male students in HE Art and Design.
 - (If so) which subject areas within Creative Arts and Design it might be feasible to attract more males to.
 - Whether there are any implications of gender issues for the curriculum, assessment processes and teaching and learning strategies.

7.5 Minority ethnic and mature students

- It should be ensured that all relevant staff are aware of issues related to widening participation potentially experienced by minority ethnic and mature students.

7.6 Disability support

- It should be ensured that support for physical and sensory disabilities, LDD and dyslexia is put in place as soon as possible at the start of HE.

7.7 Mental health

- The following aspects of mental health should be examined:
 - What mental health means in relation to HE Art and Design.
 - The extent to which the supply of mental health services is appropriate for students' needs.
 - Staff roles, and their limits, in relation to mental health issues.
 - The extent to which there is stigma about mental health issues and, if so, how to minimise this.
 - How to raise staff and student awareness of mental health issues.
 - The implications of mental health issues for the development of assessment procedures, the curriculum and teaching and learning approaches in HE Art and Design.

7.8 Personal experience

- The widening participation agenda should be utilised to help maximise the diversity of work in HE Art and Design.
- Where appropriate, students should use their personal experience of widening participation issues in their Art and Design practice, in a structured way.
- In focusing on using personal experience to enrich diversity within Art and Design, the CHEAD/ ACE case studies and the University of Worcester's work should be drawn upon.

7.9 Staff

- The awareness of staff across all sectors, from primary to HE, of their potential to influence, positively and negatively, students' decision making about HE Art and Design should be raised.
- Staff awareness of students' potential lack of confidence should be raised.

- Case studies from the CHEAD/ ACE research should be used to raise awareness.

7.10 Literacy

- Staff awareness of literacy issues in relation to HE Art and Design should be developed.
- In raising awareness, examples of promising practice, including those collected through the CHEAD/ACE research, should be drawn upon.
- The extent to which current practice in addressing literacy issues targets appropriately the full range of literacy demands in HE Art and Design should be assessed.
- It should be assessed whether there are sufficient numbers of staff who can support the demand for literacy-related work.

7.11 The student voice

- There should be an appropriate focus on the student voice in research, policy and practice on widening participation in HE Art and Design.
- The student views expressed in the CHEAD/ ACE qualitative research should be disseminated widely, including those data which emphasise the students' active human agency.
- Data on the student voice should be used:
 - In professional development on widening participation.
 - As part of widening participation activities with potential and current HE students.
- HE Art and Design institutions/ departments should use the CHEAD/ACE qualitative research to review the extent to which their methods for collecting students' views enable students to give their views openly and in a sustained way.

7.12 Presentation of information about widening participation

- All information on widening participation issues, from, for instance information about disability support to policies relevant to widening participation, should be presented clearly and coherently.
- It should be ensured that policies relevant to widening participation are accessible to their intended audience.
- Sources of student support for widening participation issues should be advertised as widely as possible.

7.13 Professional development

- Using findings from the CHEAD/ACE research and any evidence on good practice in other institutions, HE Art and Design institutions/ departments should assess the extent to which existing professional development systematically:
 - Covers all relevant areas of widening participation in HE Art and Design.
 - Targets all relevant staff, including administrative, support and part-time staff.
- HE Art and Design institutions/ departments should incorporate a map of institutional/departmental widening participation activity into professional development.
- The feasibility of a national professional development programme on widening participation in HE Art and Design, drawing on the quantitative and qualitative findings of the CHEAD/ ACE research, should be examined. This should be sufficiently flexible to be tailored to the context of individual HEIs.

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