

National context – National Colleges

The expectation for the National College is to be a leading provider of world class skills education in the creative industries and to achieve Ofsted 'Outstanding' in three years.

The education sector is looking to National College as flagship centre, setting the standard for exceptional technical education. Excellence in teaching and learning is paramount to the success of industry-led National College.

The National College Creative Industries – The Hub (Headquarters) and Spokes

The National College is based at the Backstage Centre, The Headquarters, in High House Production Park (HHPP) in Thurrock. The Centre enjoys the prestige of being associated with major arts organisations such as the Royal Opera House, ACME Artists' Studios and Kinetika as well as local partners such as Metal who work in nearby Grays. Thurrock Music Hub and the Royal Opera House Bridge are also co-located. HHPP sits at the heart of the wider creative economy of the South East.

National College Standard: Industry Facilities and Industry Professionals

Situated just 30 minutes from London, it offers a fully-equipped space for all types of production rehearsal and training requirements, from large-scale theatre and opera to arena-scale band rehearsals, The Backstage Centre can easily accommodate any production needs.

The Backstage Centre has been designed in consultation with industry experts from some of the world's best theatre and venues to provide a versatile and bespoke production environment. Within this setting, National College students train alongside the professionals who rehearse, record and film there. National College students will work alongside industry professionals as part of their journey towards learning the exceptional work skills employers demand, enabling them to secure the job of the future.

The National College Creative Industries has been founded by leading employers including: Live Nation, the Royal Opera House, the BBC, Royal Liverpool Philharmonic, Manchester Royal Exchange, the National Theatre, Ambassadors Theatre Group, White Light, BECTU and the Association of British Theatre Technicians (ABTT). Our curriculum is designed by the industry for the industry, providing specialist hands-on training in the technical skills required by the creative and cultural sector.

Background

The digital and creative sector is estimated to have contributed £134 billion in gross value added (GVA) to the UK economy in 2014. Within this total, digital sectors contributed £76 billion and creative sectors contributed £58 billion. The digital and creative sector is estimated to have directly accounted for 8.7 per cent of total UK GVA in 2014, up from 7.5 per cent in 2002'. There is evidence to support a shortage of 6,000 'offstage and backstage' workers in music, performing arts and the broader entertainment industries. The National College Creative Industries offer have three routes, some of which is in development:

- Technical production – leading to work behind the scenes in music, live events, theatre, opera, dance, broadcasting and film.
- Audience and participation – leading to work in connective creative and cultural outputs to customers and communities
- Operation – leading to work in portal management of creative organisations, ranging from office management or ticketing and box office to duty management and facilities managers

The National College Creative industries secured a transfer of the Backstage Centre (the former trading arm of CC Skills) which was finalised on 31 January. Since 1 February, the National College is the sole owner of the Backstage Centre trading subsidiary which is a £5.5 million asset on a long lease at peppercorn rent - the annual turnover of the Centre is around £500,000.

Our curriculum offer:

We offer apprenticeships at Level 3 and are in early discussions on Level 4 higher apprenticeship delivery. We are developing curriculum standards with employers on Events Assistant, Customer Service (Ticketing), Customer Service, Front of House (FOH) and Live Events Rigger.

We work closely with the awarding body, University of the Arts London (UAL). In September 2016, we launched the pilot of the Level 4 Professional Diploma in Technical and Production Practice for Creative Industries and have delivered an apprenticeship offer for the creative industries which the National College inherited from Creative and Cultural Skills (CC Skills).

The College have placed the apprenticeship standards at the heart of our curriculum strategy. UAL used the apprenticeship model as inspiration in forming the structure of the new Level 4 Professional Diplomas.

National Reach

The National College already has a modest national reach. Although an apprenticeship may be with London-based employers, their apprentices can be working on location across the country. We also have apprentices in Cambridge, Hertfordshire, Ipswich, Norwich, Nottinghamshire, Shropshire and Winchester. We are working with large, levied employers such as Star and Live Nation on their apprenticeship standard provision in Manchester, Liverpool and Bristol. The National College plan is for The Backstage Centre in Purfleet Thurrock to be the 'hub' and to set the standard of students working 'side-by-side' with industry professionals. Our intention is to link with cultural venues across the UK which will become the 'spokes' for the National College. Discussions are underway with these venues, although no formalised agreements have been made at this stage.

The students we aim to attract to the Thurrock campus will be drawn from accessible inner-city boroughs such as Barking and Dagenham, Tower Hamlets and Lewisham. These are some of the country's most culturally diverse areas with high levels of deprivation. Thurrock, Havering, Basildon and Medway are other targets location for prospective students which also have high levels of social and economic challenges. Once the National College establishes 'spokes' across the UK; key criteria will be a cultural venue whose location is within easy access for students from ethnically and socially diverse backgrounds. The model of education is employer-led, hands-on learning with leading industry practitioners equipping National College students with the skills required for the 'off-stage and back-stage' occupations. This flexible model will allow students to enter the creative industries – which might previously have excluded them - by developing their skills and natural aptitude within a more practical learning model. These students will flourish in the high level technical training; however, will still need the progression routes from level 2 – 5 to ensure they are able begin their education journey with a firm grounding.

The National College Creative Industries works alongside the Employer Steering Group made up of representatives from the sector including Royal Opera House, Southbank Centre, National

Theatre, Roundhouse, Liverpool Philharmonic, Manchester Royal Exchange, and the Local Authority. We are currently in discussions with the Employer Steering Group on strategies to broaden the network as well as developing the employer engagement strategy for the National College.

As approximately 30% of our funding will be through apprenticeships, we expect to receive a combination of direct employers (levied) and SME Employer Government funded, 30% through Advance Learner Loans and 40% through EFA funding. This business model does not include any full cost recovery courses for industry or special Continuing Professional Development which is an area for further expansion. Our ambition is to increase student numbers to 1,000 in five years.