

Your Future **me** Design Thinking Problem Brief

Department:
Art and Performance

Opening question:

Creative education is under threat from different angles; how can you argue for the value of a creative arts degree?

Context:

Changes to the way Higher Education is funded – particularly the implementation of full course fees more than a decade ago – has led to much talk about the value of different types of degree. Value is often very narrowly defined by the Government, in monetary terms, as career earnings potential. This is reflected in the data on graduate outcomes and earnings collected by the government and given to prospective students (for example, via discoveruni.gov.uk) in order for them to make informed decisions about the courses they may commit to and the career pathways that those courses may unlock.

Art and performance play this game at a disadvantage. Career earnings do tend to be lower than average (though clearly there are spectacular exceptions to that). It's likely that other motivations play a significant part in our students' course decisions and career aspirations. Ask yourself: how much part did career earnings potential play in your decision to commit to a creative arts degree? What were your motives? What other values underpinned your decision? How would you argue for the value of a creative arts degree?

Starting points/prompts:

These are only starting points: your values, your motives, are what we want you to explore and articulate.

- Creative arts degrees may lead to fulfilling careers, whether that's as an artist, or in the wider cultural and creative sectors. Does fulfilment matter more than career earnings?
- The creative arts play an important role in fostering individual and societal health and wellbeing. Did this play a part in your decision to do a creative arts degree?
- Flexible creative careers have been seen as the model for contemporary work: insecure, short-term, and project-based. Can we value a creative arts education pragmatically for how it equips us for contemporary life and work?
- Creative arts higher education can be valued in itself, as a time of experiment, aspiration and utopian thinking. Is this a matter of valuing the present and its possibilities over the future? Or is it a matter of imagining new futures, possibly ones not completely determined by monetary values?