

Aimhigher Sussex

January 2011

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Creative and Media

Information for those interested in careers
in the creative and media industries



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Creative and Media Contents

Whether you're in the first few years of secondary school or coming to the end of your school or college years, you will already have or soon be making decisions about your future. This leaflet is for those interested in careers in the creative and media industries and will give you an idea of opportunities in these areas and advice about what to do next.

3 The overview

3 Media

- 3 Advertising
- 4 Facilities Houses
- 4 Film, TV and Radio
- 4 Interactive media
- 4 Journalism
- 4 Photographic Industry
- 4 Publishing

5 Performing Arts

- 5 Acting
- 5 Dance
- 5 Music
- 5 Support Roles

7 Visual Arts

- 7 Craft
- 7 Fine Art
- 7 Illustration
- 7 Installation
- 7 Sculpture

7 Literary Arts

- 7 Editors
- 7 Proof Readers
- 7 Writers

10 Design

- 10 Animation
- 10 Computer Games
- 10 Fashion
- 10 Graphic
- 10 Product
- 10 Retail and Business Development
- 10 Textiles
- 10 Web

11 Cultural Industries

- 11 Museum and Gallery Work
- 11 Library Work
- 11 Archaeology
- 11 Archive Work
- 11 Event Management

12 What qualifications do I need?

16 The future

18 Next Steps

Creative and Media The overview

Like the idea of being a journalist? Want to be involved behind the camera? Want to dance for a living? Want to design computer games? If the answer is yes to any of these then it's likely you are interested in working in the creative and media industries.

So what's attracting you to working in the creative and media industries? And how much do you know?

For example, do you know the answers to these questions:

How much do you think you'll earn?

What kind of places might you work in and who with?

What kind of hours might you have to put in?

How hard is it to get a job and are you the kind of person that suits this kind of work?

These are all important questions to answer! Think about what's important to you.

For starters did you know?

- In the UK over 650,000 people work in the creative and media industries.
- It is the UK's fastest growing sector.
- Many people in creative and media industries are freelance (this means they work for themselves and don't have a single employer) and work may often be temporary.
- It is an uncertain and competitive industry and many people will have another job outside the creative field.
- You can make a good living from some creative and media jobs but many people start off with very low salaries, even working for free in order to get experience.
- Depending on what you do you might find yourself working in an office, studio, on location (which could be anywhere from a desert in Africa to a British beach in winter), a theatre, in your own home or a variety of other locations.
- Creative and media work is not all glitz and glamour. You may have to work every day of the week and very long hours to meet deadlines and have no work at all at times.

- You need to be flexible, adaptable, happy to learn new skills, be good at networking (making contact with people) and at finding your own work.
- Across the board there is a need for more skills particularly in IT, technical skills, people and project management, business skills and commercial awareness. If you are interested in creative and media roles it is worth making yourself as industry ready as possible by ensuring you have these skills. More about this later.

* Source: The National Guidance Research Forum (www.guidance-research.org) and Skillset (www.skillset.org).

Media

The creative and media industry is huge and developing rapidly. There are many different areas of work and a variety of jobs within them. Over the next few pages we will look at some of these and give you an idea of what kind of work is available, what they might entail and how to start in this career path.

Because the media industry is large it has a fair amount of overlap so roles can be transferred to different types of media. You might like to think about whether you are interested in creative or technical roles or a combination of the two. The media (which includes the audio visual industries such as TV work) is central to what's called the information and knowledge economy, a very important part of the UK's economy.

Advertising From the adverts you see on TV to those online, in magazines and newspapers and other kinds of promotion, advertising products can make companies much more money and advertising agencies help them do this. Roles range from the creatives who dream up the images and words for campaigns, to those that handle the accounts (the different advertising campaigns) and support services. See www.ipa.co.uk for more information.

Facilities Houses These offer support services to the creative industries including outside broadcast roles like camera operators, equipment hire and post production support such as special effects and audio. This area is constantly evolving due to changes in technology. You may need a show reel (footage that demonstrates your ability such as editing) in order to gain work. See www.skillset.org/facilities for more information.

Film, TV and Radio There are various parts to the film making process – the development, production and the distribution. Watching the end credits of a film will give you an idea of just how many people are involved in its creation. TV, like film, has a huge range of jobs on offer from hair and make-up to broadcast journalism to camera work to sound, lighting and production. Radio (either publically funded, commercial, community or through independent production companies) offers jobs such as presenting, programme controllers and station managers. See www.skillset.org (the film, TV and radio tabs) for more information.

Interactive Media This includes the more recent areas of the internet, multimedia and interactive television. Job roles might include design, IT and telecommunications. See www.skillset.org/interactive for more information.

Journalism Passionate about writing and informing or providing opinions? Then journalism could be for you. Journalists write for newspapers, magazines and specialist publications and they may produce news or focus on a particular topic such as music or fashion. This may also require a particular style of writing. See www.nctj.com for more information. The website www.journalism.co.uk also has advice on work experience and jobs and is local to Brighton.

Photographic Industry Photographers (from fashion to medical) make up the majority of this creative area but there are also jobs in picture libraries, manufacturers, retail, laboratories and support. See www.skillset.org/photo for more information.

Publishing Publishing is all about the printing of words. This includes books, newspapers, magazines, and other material including online publications. Jobs usually fall into the editorial process (those that produce and edit words), design of publications (the people that make it look good such as graphic artists and designers), the production department (who oversee the printing process and make sure everything is organised) and selling and marketing the final product or advertising space within the publication. See www.skillset.org/publishing for more information.

TIP:

The most important thing is to get work experience as soon as possible. Making contacts with people in the areas that interest you is essential in order to get into the media.

Q. I am 16 and interested in working in the media. Are there specific courses I should do?

A. If you are interested in the technical side of things then science, maths or a technology subject may be suitable. If you are more interested in the creative side of things then either fashion, art, photography, English, music or performing arts may prepare you further. Many areas in the media don't demand specific courses but do want people with experience and an understanding of how it works. See the qualifications and contacts page for more information.

Performing arts

Working in the performing arts can be divided into three areas: creating, performing and staging. If you know or think you'd enjoy composing music, writing plays for the theatre, or choreographing dance moves then you are probably interested in the creation of performing arts. Creative artists may spend a lot of time working alone and will have to build up a good reputation in order to get work. Only a small proportion of people will earn enough to do this type of work full time.

Perhaps you would prefer to perform a piece of art? If you like to play music, dance, act or entertain in some other way then you are probably interested in performing. Performers may spend a lot of time auditioning for parts, the work is very unreliable and many will have second unrelated jobs.

Once you have the piece to be performed and the people to perform it you need the people to bring it all together. This includes producers (who make sure the production sells), directors, promoters, managers and various technicians and others involved in performing arts such as those that deal with lighting, sound, set and costume design. Most of these roles will need a significant amount of on-the-job experience.

Acting Whether on the big screen, the small screen or the stage acting can be a very profitable and exciting career. But it is not all glamorous and it can be very hard to secure work. A good actor needs raw talent and to be able to persevere despite rejection. Some will attend stage schools in order to gain skills and get inside knowledge such as meeting people who can help their career and hearing about opportunities. Visit www.drama.ac.uk for more information on courses at the UK's 22 main drama schools.

Dance From ballet to hip hop to salsa, dancers tend to train in one or more dance styles and perform in theatre productions, and other roles such as backing dancers for musicians. Like actors, dancers have to go where the work is so they may have to move locations as well as compete with many other dancers for often low paid work. It can also be a

short-lived career and many will go on to teach or choreograph (design the dance moves). The website www.cdnet.org.uk/about-us/answers-for-dancers lists professional dance schools and has a section where you can email dance career related questions.

Music Whether you enjoy composing, performing or both; if you are passionate about music, talented and are good at promoting your talent then music may be for you. From composing for theatre production, film and TV scores, jingle writing and writing for musicians there are many avenues to get your music heard but it can be very competitive. Perhaps even more so is being a performer whether you are part of an orchestra or want to be the next big thing. There are also roles such as promotion (be it organising gigs, working for a record label or manufacturing merchandise for a band) if you want to work in music but not in the performance side. Remember though, that the industry is changing rapidly and the current set up of record labels may well soon come to an end. Visit www.creative-choices.co.uk/jobs-careers-news/music for further information.

Support Roles As well as those that create and make the arts there are a range of other professions that make the art available to an audience. There are the people who finance and oversee and manage the visual aspect of productions to those with technical duties. These kinds of roles may demand training either on the job or through higher education and lots of work experience. Visit www.creative-choices.co.uk for more information.

TIP.1

If you are interested in the performing arts the first thing to do is get involved with school performances. You may be able to contribute to school plays through either creating, performing or staging the production. Also get involved with performance groups outside school such as local amateur dramatics or drama groups.

TIP.2

Interested in organising events? Then promoting might be for you and it is something you can get into while still at school. Perhaps your school or a local venue will let you host a band night. Many successful promoters, managers and others whose role is to bring the arts to people start off by trying it out.

Q. I'm in a band and that's all I want to do. What's the point of thinking about anything else?

A. Music is a notoriously difficult industry to break into and even if you do there is often a short life span. Knowledge of the business side of the industry may help. Being in a band is a great first step but you may also want to have a back-up plan. There are many jobs in music (sound engineering, production, marketing, teaching) which could help you earn money whilst you follow your dream.

Q. I want to act but everyone says there's no point because it's too unreliable.

A. Acting may not be a reliable career but there are success stories. Think about whether you want to act for enjoyment or as your career. Acting does not require specific courses (although they may hone your skills) so you could study for something else while auditioning and acting on the side. That way you have the best of both worlds.

Visual Arts

Visual arts include people who make art for art's sake and then try to earn from that art and those that produce art as one element in a process. For example a fine artist may produce a painting they hope to sell but have no guarantee of doing so whereas a graphic designer may produce work as part of an advert because an advertising agency requested it.

Most areas of work in the visual arts require professional training such as a degree as this will give you a portfolio of your work to demonstrate your ability. Some areas such as crafts you may learn on the job through an apprenticeship.

Art can be a hard path as the sale of your art, especially early in your career, is down to how good you are at promoting yourself. If you gain a reputation you may well work on commission which means you will be asked to create and know you will be paid for your work, but many artists don't have this guarantee. Illustrators are more likely to be secure in their work as their art often complements another piece of commercial work. For example they may illustrate a book cover, an article in a magazine or their images be used in an advertising campaign. The websites www.a-n.co.uk/students and www.creative-choices.co.uk offer more information on different careers.

Craft Artists who work in crafts are likely to study a specialism, for example stonemasons, jewellers, engravers and goldsmiths. If their work is good and there are few people working in the field they may find they are very sought after for their practical skill but for many the pay is low.

Fine Art When most people think of artists they may have fine artists in mind. They produce original art they choose themselves (although sometimes at the request of a paying customer – this is called working for commission) in a range of media. It can be very hard to make a living out of fine art. You have to be very good at selling your art.

Illustration Illustrators create the images that usually accompany words. This could be in books, magazines, newspapers, online, for advertising campaigns and computer games. They need to be good at telling a story and delivering what is asked of them.

Installation Like sculpture installation art is often three dimensional but rather than being one piece it may take up an entire room and also incorporate new media such as video, sound, and virtual reality.

Sculpture Sculptors produce three dimensional artwork in materials such as wood and metal. These might be displayed in peoples' homes, public places or in galleries. As with fine art, it can be very hard to make a living and you have to work hard to promote yourself.

Literary Arts

Love the written word? Work in the literary arts ranges from writing fiction and real life stories such as biographies, to editing and proof reading work for publication

Editors The primary role of an editor is to review writing prior to publication, focussing on the content. For example a novelist will be advised by their editor on improvements for their book.

Proof Readers After editing and before a piece of writing is published proof readers are the last ones to see it. They check for grammar and spelling errors or layout mistakes.

Writers Becoming a writer is almost always hard work at first and can take many years of trying. Writers tend to specialise in a given genre, such as crime, children's writing, screenwriting (writing for film or television) or poetry, and approach publishers who also specialise in that work. Some writers also use literary agents to represent their work and help them get published. Go to New Writing South website www.newwritingsouth.com/resources and view their resources and information for professional writers.



Job title: Music Journalist



What do you do: Staff Writer and Editorial Assistant at Rock Sound Magazine.

This includes admin roles like online social networking and magazine branding. I send out reviews and ensure copy is submitted by deadline. I write features, reviews, and online content as well as organise festivals, club nights and gigs. I interview world famous (and smaller) bands and generally listen to lots of music!

What's the best and worst thing about what you do? The best thing is avoiding living in the real world! I interview musicians, go to gigs and get music for free and get to articulate my opinions on music through writing. In terms of working in a creative, interesting and unpredictable world I am certainly in a privileged position. As with many jobs in the creative industry pay is incredibly low. Print journalism is a dying trade, so jobs are scarce and there's always somebody waiting in the wings, so you have to be on the ball rather than over indulging and burning out!

University course/s studied and where: MA Journalism – Sunderland University and a BA English Literature (with one year Language and Linguistics) at Newcastle University.

A-Levels/equivalent: Advanced Extension Award English – Merit, A Level Literature / Language - A/A, Photography – A, History – A, Drama & Theatre Studies – B and General Studies – C.

Were the subjects you studied relevant to what you do now? Photography, drama and English allow a certain level of self-expression and exhibitionism which is perfect for having the confidence to interview people. History and later Law helped with fact based learning. Things like shorthand have proved to be less useful.

How did you decide what you wanted to do? I wanted to be a frontwoman in a band, but I gave up on that when I realised I had no musical talent! At 18 I decided to go to uni as I did well in my A-Levels rather than tour Europe as a photographer for my boyfriend's band. I regretted that choice, but stuck it out and also started working at a newspaper because I preferred it to Uni and it helped pay for my masters. Music has always been my passion and writing about it came very naturally. I was lucky to gain an internship at Rock Sound, freelanced for six months, then was given a full time job.

What do you recommend for someone interested in this career? A journalism and English background isn't necessary if you have a natural flair for writing. But media students are ten a penny so if you don't have a degree you probably won't stand up in an interview against someone who does. Music journalists seem to fall into one of two camps – ruthlessly focussed, workaholics, or lucky, opportunistic types that probably wouldn't last five minutes in a more conventional job. Be prepared for rejection because that's sadly an inevitable part of the job, and developing a thick skin is important just to protect yourself!

What would you have done differently if anything? I would have been a bit less eager to take on everything and been more professional, because the music industry is made up of a small network of people.

What next? Perhaps PR? English and journalism are quite good in terms of transferrable skills, networking, building up a firm contact base and being able to do long hours lend themselves to a lot of jobs these days. Though I should probably take a computer course at some point and learn html.

TIP.1

The most successful visual artists often are very good at selling their work as well as having creative ability. Many artists will have a trade or work in another area of art to ensure an income. For example they may work as a graphic artist for a magazine but work on their own art in their spare time.

TIP.2

If you are interested in writing as a career the best advice is to get writing! Write for yourself, school newspaper, local and online publications. Or how about creating your own blog and emailing it to your friends and family, or post it on facebook! Put together a "writer's CV" listing work you have had published. Cut out your published work and keep it in a portfolio to show people – whatever course or job you apply for, your communication skills will be a key asset.

TIP.3

Many visual arts careers require you to take a foundation year in art before a university course. During this year you try out lots of different types of art to discover which you prefer and that helps you when considering which degree to do. See www.ucas.ac.uk, the students section, specific subjects and choose art and design. UCAS will give you information about the current entry requirements for these courses.

Q. I like English – what can I do other than be an English teacher?

A. Sometimes it's hard to see what school subjects can lead to. One thing to do is to think about the skills you learn while studying. For example English gives you fluency in writing and speaking, and an ability to communicate, analyse and express ideas. When you are researching jobs look at jobs that have this element. You may also like to visit the website www.prospects.ac.uk and go to the 'options with your subject' section under the careers advice tab. Here you can look at different subjects and the job options they might lead to.

Having said that, if you have the aptitude and flair for teaching, it can be a hugely rewarding job and you can specialise in art, English, drama, fashion or media and many other subjects if you teach at secondary school – there can be even more variety if you teach in a college, university, or in the community. For information on careers in teaching visit the schools' Training and Development Agency website www.tda.gov.uk.

Design

People who work in design create products or images that sell either on their own or as part of something greater. Design careers often demand training in higher education in order to gain the necessary skills.

Animation A classic example of an industry that crosses many sectors in the creative industries. Animators create content for TV, films, computer games and websites and usually specialise in either 2D, 3D or stop frame animation all of which require specialist training. You can find out more at www.skillset.org/animation.

Computer Games Love playing computer games and think you can do better? Creating games requires a combination of skills in making the game look right and play right so jobs generally come under programming, art or design. Many people start off in quality assurance, testing games for how they play and errors, but you will need further skills to move on so a degree can be valuable. It is a growing area and very popular. See www.skillset.org/games for more information.

Fashion Fashion design is a hugely competitive area. Some designers will work on one off pieces while others work on ranges for high street stores. Although becoming a fully fledged fashion designer is only achieved by the minority there are many other roles such as pattern cutting and production management. See www.canucutit.co.uk, www.skillset.org/fashion_and_textiles and www.skillfast-uk.org/justthejob for more information.

Graphics Graphic designers work with words and images to put across a message. They are employed in areas such as producing advertising campaigns and marketing material. See www.creative-choices.co.uk under the design section for more information.

Product Every non-natural thing you see around you has been designed at some point and that's where product designers come in. They consider how a product needs to look and function so that the market (either the public or a specialist buyer) will want to purchase it. Some concentrate on how it looks so have a more art based background while others consider the technical aspects so may study for a more engineering based qualification. See www.designcouncil.org.uk for more information.

Retail and Business development From buying to marketing to logistics and finance the retail world supports the fashion and product design industry. If you walk into a shop and think "I could have arranged this better" or wonder why certain clothes are in a store then this might be the area for you. For more information visit www.skillsmartretail.com.

Textiles From designing, dyeing and crafting textiles, people in the textile industry create and service material for use. See www.techtextiles.co.uk, www.skillset.org/fashion_and_textiles and www.skillfast-uk.org/justthejob for more information.

Web The majority of businesses these days will have some online presence and web designers work to create websites for clients. Both creative and technical skills (for example, in web development) are important, as websites need to look a certain way as well as function well. You can find out more about this fast-moving area at www.bcs.org and www.e-skills.com/Careers.



Cultural Industries

Are you interested in protecting the past? Perhaps you'd like to help ensure museums stay up and running? Or perhaps you love the idea of organising events such as festivals? Jobs in the cultural industries range from working in heritage preserving and studying past generations, to library and information work to event management. You may find yourself working in areas such as museums and libraries in roles such as curating, archaeology and education. Many, but not all, of these roles will need specialist qualifications such as a postgraduate course which you do after a first degree. See the website www.creative-choices.co.uk for more information.

Museum and Gallery Work Roles in museum and gallery work include educators, crafts people, designers, technicians, gallery assistants, volunteer coordinators, administrators, exhibition demonstrators, developmental work and fundraising. Museum and gallery work is varied and you may take on lots of responsibility early on. It is also very competitive and may be low paid at first. Go to www.museumsassociation.org and click on the careers tab for further information. Go to www.gallery-jobs.org for information about working in galleries.

Library Work Librarians look after information for public access. They order, sort and manage the information as well as take on other roles within a library setting. See the 'jobs and careers' tab on www.cilip.org.uk for more information.

Archaeology Archaeologists research, search for information in historical sites and preserve and analyse their findings to help make sense of the past. Look under the 'education' tab at www.britarch.ac.uk for further information.

Archive Work Archivists build and maintain collections of worthwhile information of how people have lived. This could be in the shape of books, films, or computer records. The website www.archives.org.uk has useful information under the 'careers' tab.

Event Management If you like organising parties as well as attending them then event organising might be for you. With any activity where there is a group of people in the same location, whether an exhibition, festival, conference, or concert: all of these have been organised by someone. Visit www.aceinternational.org for more information.



Creative and Media

What qualifications do I need?

So how do I become a.....? Now you have a bit more of an idea about some of the different roles in creative and media industries but you might wonder what you need to study to do them.

It can be hard while you are at school to think about which subjects are best for your future plans. You might ask how you can make decisions now when you're not sure what you want to do. This is why it is a good idea to think about and research areas that you think might interest you, so that you can keep as many options open as possible.

Many employers in the creative and media industries value people with experience, enthusiasm and those that show potential. While if you are interested in visual creative roles taking art is a sensible option, not all other roles demand specific subjects at school or particular courses. Do check websites such as www.connexions-direct.com/jobs4u for different job roles and the courses they recommend. Some will require specific vocational courses while with others a more general degree might be appropriate.

Remember also that while you may be interested in working in the creative arts and media it may be the more technical roles that appeal so subjects such as science and maths might be worth considering.

It is also very important is to combine your studies with as much relevant work experience as you can.



If you are having trouble thinking about your future and the steps you need to take try working backwards!

For example Cassie is 13 and is just starting to consider what subjects she'd like to study at GCSE. She has had some thoughts about her future and likes the idea of something to do with art possibly design. She is quite talented at art but also enjoys sciences and design technology.

Fast forward to the future

Cassie enjoys art and design as well as the sciences. Right now she doesn't know about the career options open to her. By exploring future ideas the decisions she has to make now will become easier.

So Cassie should: look through the professions under the headings of visual art and design in this booklet, and also some of the media roles which feature design such as interactive media, visit the recommended websites above and see if there are particular jobs that stand out, then find out more about them on www.connexions-direct.com/jobs4u.

Higher Education

Websites such as www.connexions-direct.com/jobs4u and the recommended ones above will give you an idea of the type of qualifications necessary for the jobs that interest you.

Cassie liked the look of graphic design and product design. When she researched these from the website above she discovered that students usually take engineering or arts-based product design degrees, and graphic designers take graphic design degrees. Both arts-based courses require a year of foundation art before the university course. The website www.ucas.com has all the higher education courses available in the UK which you can browse through for ideas. Remember every university is different.

School and college options at 16

One way of checking which subjects are needed for specific university courses is on the www.ucas.com website. Checking the entry requirements of courses that interest you (these are listed in every course's entry profile) will help you choose the right subjects to study at A-Level or equivalent and help you be aware of what grades you need to aim for. For Cassie, art would be necessary at A-Level or BTEC. For most art-related courses you also need to take it at GCSE or diploma level in order to progress. Also if the engineering side of product design interests her then she should take maths and a science at A-Level and if possible separate sciences at GCSE.

Now!

Cassie now knows she needs to take art at GCSE and possibly A-Level and that separate sciences may be sensible at GCSE with a view to maybe taking them further.

However, she should make sure she has explored her interests and options as much as possible. She should continue to do this regularly as she may develop new interests.



Job title: Games Developer (officially 'Research Assistant')



What do you do: I design and make computer games. This involves creating a blueprint of the key gameplay and technical aspects of a title that will make it fun to play, and to see that through a development cycle. It takes plenty of cooperation between many people to make a game. My role is focussed on the core programming (logic) that enables the game to be playable and, hopefully, fun.

What's the best and worst thing about what you do? The best thing is the amount of freedom and creativity in my work. I get to make decisions on how the game will be played and this ultimately creates the experience. Worst thing must be the hours. Towards the end of a game cycle it is generally accepted to put in 18+ hour shifts during the notorious "crunch".

University course studied and where: University of Sussex, Multimedia Digital Systems.

A-Levels/equivalent: I.T, Maths, Art

Were the subjects you studied relevant to what you do now? Absolutely. For my final year project (dissertation) at university, I decided to make my own computer game from scratch using the latest in motion capture technology that my University had available to students. My work grabbed the attention of my peers which consequently led to the position I have now.

How did you decide what you wanted to do? Before I came to University I was clueless as to what career I really wanted to do. I visited career advisors, had many discussions with my family, friends and whoever could help me to make a decision. Eventually I decided upon studying a degree in Maths. After only a week, I switched to Media Studies. After a year studying Media I eventually switched to Multimedia Digital Systems as I wanted to gain some core, technical skills from my time at University. Throughout my four years at Uni I still wasn't sure what I wanted to do but I reassured myself I was learning about something I loved and felt passionate about. For anyone who hasn't pinpointed a career path for themselves I would advise them to keep focussed on what they love doing and if you remain dedicated a career will blossom naturally.

What do you recommend for someone interested in this career? If you are interested in finding a career in game development, my biggest recommendation is to gain a good understanding on what makes a game fun to play, to understand the core dynamics of why and what people love about games. People from all types of backgrounds can get involved in games. You can be an artist, a programmer, a musician, business type, they're all integral in producing a game. If you have a solid understanding in what makes a game, can find a niche for yourself out of these different roles, remain dedicated and get some experience by taking the dive and creating your own work, then you stand a very good chance to break into the industry.

What would you have done differently if anything? I would have begun creating my own, personal game a little earlier. You're constantly learning each time you sit down to develop and you learn little tips and tricks from your mistakes. That extra experience earlier in my life would have benefitted me hugely.

What next? I hope to carry on making innovative, original games and to keep up to pace with the constantly evolving technology that dominates my industry.

What should I be thinking of now?

Taking your GCSEs options?

If you are 13 or 14 then you are probably thinking about or doing GCSEs (or their equivalent). It is very important to make sure you gain key skills in Maths and English as these subjects are very important for progressing beyond the age of 16. The skills you gain in English will also prepare you for many creative and media roles. You have to do certain subjects but out of the ones you can choose consider what you enjoy. Keep in mind that if you might want to have a technical role in the creative and media industry three sciences may be useful. Also consider taking art if you enjoy visual creativity as often it is needed in order to progress to A-Level.

Considering college/6th form options?

For those interested in the media it's important to consider which subjects will provide evidence of your ability and help provide you with a portfolio showing evidence of your work. So for any art related role (such as those in the visual arts, some computer games roles and design roles in performing arts) art at A-Level or equivalent is a good idea as it is likely you will need to do an art foundation course before you go on to specialise at university. It is also possible to do an art BTEC at sixth form which may mean you can go straight to university to study art without needing to do a foundation year first.

Media studies can be considered an easier option by some universities, so if you are considering it make sure you check what the universities that you like think about it. Also do make the most of the skills you learn on the course as they may give you an edge in a media environment.

Make sure that you are aware of the UCAS points you need for courses that interest you as you may need to aim for particular grades in the subjects you are taking (see the UCAS points box for more information). Universities will also require personal statements, where you write about why you are suitable for the course you are applying for. They will look for evidence of your interest and dedication to

the course and where it may lead. Show evidence of this in describing your academic studies and also out of school activities such as sport, playing in a band, work and voluntary experience.

Q. What about the diploma?

A. At your school they may be offering diplomas in a variety of subjects at both GCSE and A-Level age although it is not clear yet whether they will continue to be offered by the current government. For those interested in creative and media industries there is a very relevant diploma – the creative and media diploma. The diploma helps you prepare for the skills and knowledge that is necessary for certain industries but you need to consider early whether you want to specialise early on. Have a look at www.keyroutes.org.uk for further information.



Creative and Media

The future

After school or college it can be hard to know what the best next steps will be. For starters if you are keen to stay in education there are around 50,000 courses to choose from in over 300 institutions. Some of these courses prepare you for a particular job (these are called vocational courses) while others provide a more general education.

We have already demonstrated that if you have some ideas about what you might like to do in the future then you can work out what courses you might need to take to get there. One thing to consider is what kind of courses or experience the jobs that interest you require. Remember for many positions in creative and media industries, specific courses are not required. Many people start in entry positions and learn on the job. However, courses with practical components may help you gain entry to the industry more easily and to a more skilled position. Higher education may also give you the opportunity gain industry placements.

The following higher and further education providers are based in Sussex:

University of Brighton www.brighton.ac.uk

University of Chichester www.chiuni.ac.uk

University of Sussex www.sussex.ac.uk

The Open University www.open.ac.uk

Bexhill College www.bexhillcollege.ac.uk

BHASVIC www.bhasvic.ac.uk

Central Sussex College www.centalsussex.ac.uk

Chichester College www.chichester.ac.uk

City College Brighton and Hove www.ccb.ac.uk

The College of Richard Collyer www.collyers.ac.uk

Northbrook College www.northbrook.ac.uk

Plumpton College www.plumpton.ac.uk

Sussex Coast College Hastings

www.sussexcoast.ac.uk

Sussex Downs College www.sussexdowns.ac.uk

Varndean College www.varndean.ac.uk

Worthing College www.worthing.ac.uk

The next steps section on the following page will help you in your decision making.

UCAS points - What on earth are they?

UCAS stands for the Universities and Colleges Admissions Service. The qualifications you study and the grades you achieve in those subjects at school or college are turned into points which allow you to enter higher education. Universities and higher education colleges will ask for a certain number of points and often specific grades in certain subjects in order for you to gain entry to the course of your choice. For more information on your qualifications and UCAS points they could 'earn' visit www.ucas.ac.uk/students/ucas_tariff.

It is worth getting to know the UCAS website at www.ucas.com. Click on the Student section to find out more about UCAS points and have a look at the courses available and the universities that offer them in the course search section. The entry profiles of each course also will tell you what the course will cover, what career opportunities it may lead to and what kind of student it may suit; which will all help you decide if it is right for you. If in doubt contact the university direct.



Job title: Fashion retailer and designer



What do you do: I work for a high street retail company as a section manager in fashion. This means I'm responsible for the sales in my section and for making sure all the stock is in place. When I left university I wanted to get experience in retail, because my aim is to open my own shop, hopefully selling my own designs.

What's the best and worst thing about what you do? The best thing is that every day is different when you're dealing with the public. And also I'm learning a lot about the way the clothing industry works. Retailers are working with a lot of top designers now which makes it interesting.

The worst thing is probably the discount sales which are unbelievably hard work. Also there's more pressure to open the sales early, so I'm working long hours around Christmas when my friends and family are out at the pub!

University course studied and where: I studied BA (Hons) Textiles Design with Business at the University of Brighton. I did a sandwich year (a year long work placement) as part of my degree. The placement was with a local retailer and was really good experience.

A Levels / equivalent: I took a BTEC National Diploma in Design (taking the fashion and clothing pathway) at college. After that, I stayed at college to do the art foundation course. I started my degree when I was 19.

How did you decide what you wanted to do? I always loved clothes but never really believed someone like me could have a career in fashion until I met a designer who had his own shop. He did fashion at university, so I looked at uni courses and found that you can also study business.

What do you recommend for someone interested in this career? I would say that they need to know what they're interested in, and what kind of job they want to do. Designing clothes is what everyone thinks of but there's also the business side of it, teaching, and learning about the technologies used. Textiles design is really competitive but if you're good, you work hard and make the right contacts, there's no reason why you shouldn't be successful.

What would you have done differently if anything? I did Level 2 BTEC when I left school, because I hadn't studied fashion design at all before. But I probably could have taken the plunge and gone straight on to the Level 3 course. It would have saved me some time, especially as I still had to do an extra year after the BTEC (for the art foundation course). The foundation course in art and design is a requirement at some universities. On the other hand, by the time I got to uni, I had tried everything in art and design and I knew I wanted my career to be in textiles.

What next? I'm working to save up some money to go to Nepal in the summer, to visit a fair trade woollens producer. I'm really passionate about good conditions for workers. Also, I love woollens and I want to learn more about different designs and techniques. After that, I'm going to apply for a loan to set up a business promoting fair trade products to businesses in the UK. If it goes well I'll rent my own premises and start selling my own designs as well.

Creative and Media

Next steps

OK, so now what?

Hopefully this pamphlet will have given you some ideas about the possibilities in creative arts and media. But your job is not done yet! In order to discover the most suitable, satisfying and enjoyable path for you as an individual you need to open your eyes to opportunities and try out as many as possible. **Try these next steps and see where they take you!**

Explore possibilities through research

Think about the subjects you are studying now and which ones you enjoy most. Also research any possible ideas you may have for your future to check if there are particular subjects you should consider studying. All FE colleges in Sussex have access to a career website called **www.talkingjobs.net** currently and until November 2012, so if you are at school or college ask careers staff for the log in details. Here you have the opportunity to view video interviews of a range of professionals talking about their work and how they got into it. There is lots more information, advice and guidance out there to help you on your journey. The following websites will start you off:

General Career Research, Tools and Information

www.skillset.org

Lots of information on different areas and the jobs within them in the media industries.

www.creative-choices.co.uk

Lots of information about the creative industries.

www.connexions-direct.com/jobs4u

Great for finding out about different types of jobs, what they are like and qualifications needed. Check the Job Families section for career inspiration.

www.prospects.ac.uk

Another excellent job search website. Also has a section that helps you think about what different subjects will lead to. Go to Careers Advice – Options With Your Subject.

www.careers-creative-living.co.uk

A website offered by the University of Arts with events, opportunities and career tools for creative people.

www.guidance-research.org

Labour market intelligence (information and statistics) about the creative and media industries.

These are just some of the websites that can help you in your research. There are many more but remember not all information online is necessarily correct.

Also there are people that can advise you such as teachers, your school Connexions adviser, school careers adviser, Aimhigher representatives, parents and carers and friends as well as those you meet in work experience. All will have valuable advice to contribute to help you in your decision making process but remember not all advice is impartial.

Sample your ideas with work experience

What does a journalist really do? Sure, the idea of being out and about getting the next scoop is exciting but what about all the time you have to spend at your desk working on the computer and the strict deadlines? One way of seeing if your dream job won't actually turn out to be a nightmare is through work experience. Work experience is valuable for many reasons but perhaps the most important is it gives you the opportunity to see the reality of your dream.

Some other reasons why work experience is great:

- Earlier we spoke about being 'industry ready'. This means when you get your first job you are able to hit the ground running because you already have an understanding of the industry and what's expected of you. Work experience will provide you with your first introduction to your area of interest.

- It helps you meet people in your area of interest. This means you have contacts (people that can help you) and are able to network (communicate and find more people to help you secure more work experience or your first job).

Many of the websites mentioned above have sections with details of people working in different creative and media areas. These might be big companies or people working for themselves. A great first step and good practice for trying out your networking skills (which as we've discussed is vital for anyone interested in this area) is to get in contact with local companies in your area. See if they will offer you a work experience placement or the very least let you come in and speak to some people working in the area that interests you.

If you are offered a placement make sure you make the most of it: speak to as many people as possible, offer to help and get involved. If you are seen as someone who listens and wants to be as 'hands on' as possible you are likely to be asked back or at least gain excellent references.

Remember: perhaps more than any other area of work, creative arts and media depend very much on being involved as much as you can in extra-curricular activities, but make sure you balance it with school work!

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Please visit **www.careerelevation.co.uk**

