

Call for papers

Creative Higher Education and Covid-19: Impacts, responses and innovations in academic practice, teaching and learning

Special issue in Arts & Humanities in Higher Education

Guest Editors

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Background

COVID-19 is the most challenging global public health crisis we have faced for decades, with an underlining economic crisis projected to have long-lasting impacts. While there has been a rush to gather data on the impact of Covid-19 on the cultural and creative industries (CCIs) (Comunian & England, 2020) there has been limited investigation so far into the specific impacts of the pandemic and associated restrictions and social distancing measures on academic practices, teaching and learning in creative higher education (HE).

Covid-19 has had an unprecedented impact on the HE sector. The disruption caused has forced universities to adapt quickly, challenged existing models in teaching, researching and learning and pushed academics to implement new approaches and ways of thinking. Many institutions moved courses online (CHEAD, 2020), which has created tensions between what are considered 'reasonable' or 'unrealistic' models for creative teaching, learning and engagement (Gunn, 2020). Some of these measures will be a temporary 'fix' during the crisis, while others will radically influence the future of HE for years to come. We also know that some of these changes have negatively impacted some staff and students more than others with regards to home-working, access to technology and precarious careers, reflecting broader social economic, geographical and technological inequalities associated with and exacerbated by the pandemic (Blundell et al., 2020). As such, COVID-19 presents us with a timely opportunity to take stock of the changes that have occurred but also to reconceptualize and reconfigure creative HE practices, including reflections on potentially more equitable and accessible futures.

Creative disciplines (Comunian et al., 2011)¹ (from animation to classical music, from choreography to glass making) offer a great range of diversity and media to allow a broader consideration of how creative HE is currently reshaping its teaching, research and learning processes. The way practice is shaped – especially in relation to digital upskilling (Comunian, Faggian & Jewell, 2015) and a potential digital turn (Flew, Ren & Wang, 2019) – might also play a role in the development of the CCIs workforce in the years to come as these disciplines represent key talent pipelines (Comunian, Faggian & Jewell, 2014). Creative HE also provides integral infrastructure for cultural and creative ecologies (Comunian & Gilmore, 2016); building networks, providing venues and facilities for creative production, public engagement, research and knowledge exchange, as well as being key local employers (Clews & Clews, 2011). Universities act as civic anchors in the community (Chatterton, 2000), and in the cultural context, they are enablers of cultural participation, public discourse and social enterprises (Comunian & Brook, 2019).

The CCIs were regarded as an important sector for industrial growth following the previous recession, and the desire for an increased, skilled workforce has been lobbied and celebrated at the policy level. Covid-19 has however exposed the reliance on precarious employment models to the attention of policy and the media as a 'risk factor' (Comunian & England, 2020), with significant

implications for sector inclusion, workforce diversity and the future sustainability of the industry (Eikhof, 2020). The creative sector is itself exemplary of emergent trends in the general labour market (Brook 2015; Throsby 2012) and creative graduates can be seen as ‘weathervanes of current changes’ (Comunian and Brook, 2019). We therefore believe creative subjects represent an interesting context to reflect on different modes and needs in HE and how these are/have been challenged by the impact of Covid-19.

Call for papers

The special issue aims to capture the impact of Covid-19 on Creative HE and more specifically on creative subject degrees taught at HE level internationally. This extends the UK-focused [Creative HE Covid](#) project run by the guest editors on the impact of the pandemic on Creative HE during the initial lock-down period. We aim to capture the experiences and strategies of academics, practitioners involved in the teaching, research, planning and management of these subject areas, and their students, with perspectives sought from across the globe and creative HE disciplines¹.

This Special Issue invites a wide range of contributions that provide critical reflection on changes and challenges to Creative HE associated with Covid-19, including short and longer term impacts, what has been learnt and policy and management implications. Contributions can be in the form of empirical and theoretical research papers, critical practice-based reflections, case studies and (auto)ethnographic accounts. The papers presented in this special issue are intended to act as valuable resources in the immediate future for academics and practitioners that could also influence future practices and learning in the CCIs more broadly.

We welcome papers on the impact of Covid 19 on Creative HE that explore, but are not limited to:

- The impact of Covid-19 on academic practice, teaching and learning across different creative subjects in HEIs
- The potential and downfalls of online learning in creative HE and specific limitations / differences in online work specifically in relation to creative subjects
- Creative solutions for creative subjects teaching during Covid-19, new modes and tools for engagement (online and offline) and opportunities the crisis has produced/promoted
- Changes to employability/professional development teaching in Creative HE and career challenges for creative graduates
- Transformations in digital and studio/making spaces
- Emerging forms of creative practice in relation to digital upskilling and/or a potential digital turn
- How Covid-19 has been incorporated into creative projects and topics within the curriculum
- New/changed practices of HE engagement with local communities and arts and cultural organisations during Covid-19
- Partnerships and collaborations within Creative HE to address the health, social and economic impacts of the pandemic and associated projects, innovations and knowledge exchange activities

- The experiences of creative students or staff both during and following lockdown(s) in response to changes to their studies and working lives
- Inequalities in Creative HE emerging from and exacerbated by the pandemic as experienced by students or staff
- Policy responses to Covid-19 that impact Creative HE

The deadline for full papers is 1st July 2021

Authors should send full papers to the editors by close of business 1st July 2021 at creativeHEcovid@gmail.com. Following an initial review, authors of selected papers will then be invited to submit to the journal.

Submissions should contain a title, author(s) name(s) and affiliations, a short bio for each author (150 words), an abstract (200 words) and manuscript (maximum 7,000 words including references).

In preparing your manuscript, please follow the guidelines for the Arts & Humanities in Higher Education journal <https://journals.sagepub.com/author-instructions/AHH>

If you have any questions about the special issue in advance of the deadline, please contact Lauren England (lengland001@dundee.ac.uk)

Editor biographies

Dr Lauren England is Baxter Fellow in Creative Economies at Duncan of Jordanstone College of Art & Design, University of Dundee. Her research addresses craft higher education and the early-career experience, with a focus on professional development education. She has published work on craft HE, creative economies development in Africa and precarity in the CCIs associated with Covid-19.

Dr Roberta Comunian is Reader in Creative Economies in the Department of Culture, Media & Creative Industries at King's College London. She is internationally recognised for her research on UK creative graduates' careers and has recently been involved in an Australian ARC grant focusing on creative graduates in Australia. She is currently involved in a H2020 funded European project that looks at the role of HE in European creative economies' development.

Dr Tamsyn Dent has five years of teaching and course development/ management experience within HEI institutions on subjects linked to creative HE. She is currently a postdoctoral researcher in the Department of Culture, Media & Creative Industries at King's College London on the H2020 funded project DISCE (Developing Inclusive and Sustainable Creative Economies) focusing specifically on the theme of "Creative workforce, skills and education".

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ⁱ We define Creative HE (short version for creative subjects taught at HE level) as all teaching connected with the following disciplinary fields: **ARCHITECTURE** (incl. landscape design); **ADVERTISING** (incl. public relations and publicity studies); **CRAFTS** (incl. ceramics, glass, metal, wood and fibre crafts); **DESIGN** (incl. graphic and multimedia design; visual communication; illustration; clothing/ textile/fashion design; industrial/product design); **FILM & TV** (incl. film and media studies; television and radio studies; media/tv/radio and film production); **CINEMATICS AND PHOTOGRAPHY** (incl. directing, producing motion pictures; film & sound recording; visual and audio effects; cinematography; photography); **FINE ARTS** (incl. curatorial studies; museum studies; drawing; painting; sculpture; printmaking; fine art conservation); **MUSIC** (incl. musicianship/ performance studies; history of music; musicology); **TECHNOLOGY** (incl. interactive and multi-media publishing; interactive and electronic design; animation techniques; software engineering; music recording); **DRAMA** (incl. acting; directing and producing for theatre; theatre studies; stage management; theatrical design and make-up; stage design); **DANCE** (incl. choreography; history of dance; types of dance); **JOURNALISM** (incl. factual reporting; mass communications and documentation); **WRITING** (incl. script writing; poetry and prose writing; imaginative writing) **AND PUBLISHING** (incl. electronic publishing and paper-based media studies). We also include courses in **ARTS & CULTURAL MANAGEMENT** and **CREATIVE & CULTURAL INDUSTRIES**.