Design Academy 2015-16: Initial insights

This report outlines early findings from Design Academy, a pilot programme delivered by Design Council to UK design schools between November 2015 and April 2016.

Design Academy Taster Session

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Why Design Council has developed Design Academy

Design – in its broadest sense – is gaining currency in businesses and organisations of all types as a powerful route to radical innovation, competitive advantage and transformational change. From global consultancies to public sector organisations, leaders are increasingly recognising traditional leadership and management responses no longer suit the growing complexities they face. As a result, there is an emerging need for leaders, managers and teams who combine:

- a more integrated skill set in order to apply design more strategically to a wide range of innovation and social challenges
- emotional intelligence as well as hard skills so as to foster a culture of empathy and customer needs as much as commercial rigour
- an understanding of why customer and user experience should be central, mirroring the need for everyone in an organisation to think about customer or end user needs and not just one division or team
- capabilities designed to challenge, question and reframe problems so that as designers, they are not simply responding to a pre-determined solution that still may not address the fundamental issue
- the ability to think and use design strategically so that multiple dimensions of design can be brought together to catalyse and deliver innovation and change.

"The most valuable learning has been working within multidisciplinary groups and getting to see new perspectives and approaches to the same challenge"

Graphic Design student, Portsmouth University

Recognition of design's broadening role is further evidenced by notable publications such as the Harvard Business Review[1] and leading international consultancy firm Deloitte[2] where the focus is increasingly on this growth area. Design Council's own research *Design Economy* (October 2015) examined the changing role of innovation in industry in recent years and indicated that more strategic design skills and capabilities are required by employers to support them in delivering innovation and growth.

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[1]*Design Thinking Comes of Age*, September 2015, which articulates the value of design in terms of problem definition as well as solution development.
[2]*Human Capital,* March 2016, which states 79% of CEOs reported that design thinking is a 'very important' trend and the sixth most popular in their organisation.

It is the challenges and opportunities that these rapidly emerging market needs present that is the core focus of Design Academy, with its aim being to support a growing number of design students to take advantage of these opportunities.

Design Council has been working closely with leaders within industry and education over the last two years to build further insight and understanding of the changing market conditions, the broadening role for design and, in turn, the needs of the future generation of designers. Having worked in the field of strategic design for a number of years, Design Council takes a longer-term view of trends within business and industry and uses these to inform how skills and capabilities of graduates may need to change.

In developing and delivering the Design Academy programme we have collaborated with businesses, public and third sector organisations, including: Apple, Autodesk, Bentley, Burberry, Cabinet Office, Capita, Google, GSK, IBM, John Lewis, Mercer, MultiAdaptor, Policy Lab, RNLI, RBS and Thinkpublic. The key challenge expressed by the majority of these organisations is that the skill-base of graduates – not only in design but also in business, engineering and other disciplines – needs strengthening around the aspects of strategic thinking and problem solving as well as being able to work in multidisciplinary teams. In response to this IBM, for example, has established its own 'missing semester' programme for its graduates to hone their skills and capabilities in these areas.

While this growth in demand should be good news for the design industry, it is the case that, largely, university design courses are taught within an overarching, discipline-led structure, focusing primarily on developing excellence within a students' discipline. These academic structures therefore often provide limited opportunity for the teaching of strategic design skills, which would enable students to respond more directly to the rapidly emerging needs in the public and private sectors.

In addition, gaining knowledge and experience in these areas has the potential to expand employment opportunities for design graduates and take them into more challenging and complex working environments, where those skills could bring innovative approaches and create new value. This would overcome the existing situation where many students believe their specific design discipline is the sole route to employment.

The government's priority on raising productivity through developing skills and human capital that give people the ability to translate high-quality knowledge into high-quality commercial outcomes gives this national importance, too. Therefore, embedding these vital new skills and capabilities into our future design leaders is critical today to ensure a thriving and dynamic economy in the longer term.

Design Academy is Design Council's response to this growing need and market demand in the public and private sectors and poses a challenge to young designers to apply their skills in a more strategic way. Design Academy aims to create greater awareness of strategic design approaches as a catalyst for innovation among the students taking part and build their confidence in applying these approaches. Underpinning this, it enables students to develop the ability to iterate, to reflect and learn from working collaboratively with peers across different disciplines and to establish greater levels of empathy. Ultimately its focus is on enabling students to shape outcomes that deliver real and lasting positive change.

In summary, the purpose of the Design Academy pilot was to:

– recruit talented design undergraduates and expose them to strategic design principles, methods and processes (based on Design Council's Framework for Innovation) to enable them to deploy their design skills in new territories
– raise awareness of the needs of industry, including and beyond the traditional design industry, through involvement of industry experts
– strengthen confidence in the employability of UK design graduates taking part
– connect design students to a diverse range of industry sectors and design disciplines
– create a more diverse design workforce – one that can produce 'design leaders' to work across a broad range of industry sectors.

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What is Design Academy and how does it work?
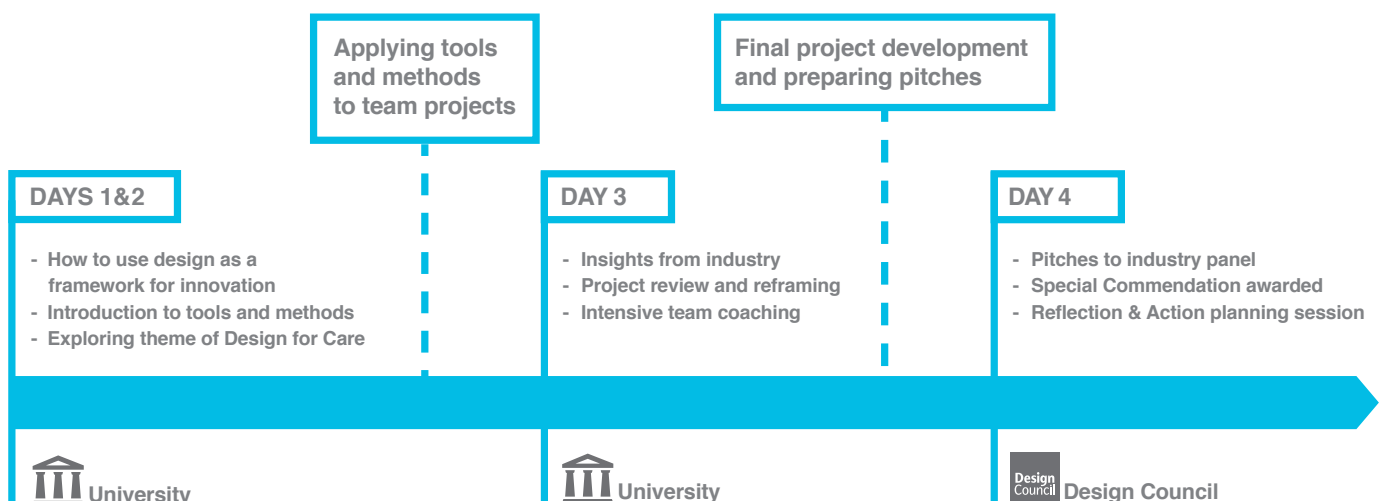
Programme structure

Design Academy is an accelerated, applied-learning programme, complementing existing curricula in design schools. It is delivered, by Design Associates[3] in collaboration with industry experts and Design Council team members, during term time to supplement existing undergraduate design programmes.

The programme is based on four intensive workshop days delivered over a period of four-six weeks, which means it's highly flexible in terms of fitting within existing curricula.

The students work in teams with peers from different design disciplines to challenge their ability to develop ideas and projects with others, bringing multiple perspectives and insights.

Students are introduced to Design Council's Framework for Innovation, which has been developed through the delivery of Design Council innovation programmes in the public and private sectors over the last two decades. The teams are assigned a challenge focusing on a major societal issue which they work to address through the key stages of the programme, these are:

1. **How to use design as a framework for innovation:** Students are taken through a series of steps with supporting tools and approaches that enable them to better understand a problem or challenge and often redefine and reframe it.

2. **Applying an 'end-to-end' innovation process**: Students are introduced to Design Council's Double Diamond. This innovation model, developed by Design Council ten years ago, enables teams to follow a robust and iterative process as they develop ideas.

3. **Methods based on user-centred design:** Teams are introduced to a selection of methods that help them gain new insights into user needs.

4. **Developing Projects:** The students are then supported to develop new propositions, which are presented as project pitches to a panel of industry experts on the final day of the programme, which takes place at Design Council.

Applying tools and methods to team projects

Final project development and preparing pitches

DAYS 1&2

- How to use design as a framework for innovation
- Introduction to tools and methods
- Exploring theme of Design for Care

DAY 3

- Insights from industry
- Project review and reframing
- Intensive team coaching

DAY 4

- Pitches to industry panel
- Special Commendation awarded
- Reflection & Action planning session

University

University

Design Council

[3]Over the last ten years, Design Council has built an expert network of delivery specialists, called Design Associates. Invited to join the network after a rigorous selection process, Design Associates bring a wide range of expertise and experience to the delivery of our programmes. The network comprises largely independent design professionals working at the top of their field across public and private sector organisations.

An important feature of the programme is that it is based on a 'learn-by-doing' approach; the students are actively encouraged to go out and directly apply the methods and tools they have learned in the classroom. Therefore the four days of workshop-based activity with Design Council are additional to the time teams then invest in working together to apply what they have learned directly to the research and development tasks which will help to redefine the problem and strengthen their core ideas.

Students work in interdisciplinary teams of between three to five people. Each university programme has a maximum of 30 students participating. An average of four design disciplines are typically represented within each university cohort. We believe this to be an important feature of the Design Academy approach, as through our conversations with universities we understand that within the day-to-day running of a course it is often challenging to bring students from different disciplines together.

"I have learned some amazing methods and approaches that have already influenced the way I approach a project."

Graphic Design student, Nottingham T rent University

As the timescale of the programme is over four to six weeks, we have worked closely with universities to ensure that it can fit as flexibly as possible into the set curriculum for the academic year. This has enabled our university partners to slot the programme in at appropriate points within a semester when it will deliver the maximum value to students. This is not always straightforward, as Design Academy works across a number of different courses and needs to ensure timings align well and maximise student availability. However, the efforts have seemed to pay off as this timescale and approach allowed students time and space outside their normal learning context to apply the methods they have learned and reflect on the course content while maintaining momentum within the programme.

Learning in context

Design Academy examines a societal theme (and an active Design Council programme) as the core area of focus for students, meaning they benefit from working on a 'live brief'. The focus for 2015-16 was *Design for Care*[4]. This resulted in opportunities for students to connect with industry and public sector networks already working with Design Council on this issue, enhancing their understanding and learning.

Each team is assigned a different opportunity area to explore from one of two themes: 'supporting self-reliance' or 'strengthening civic society'. Opportunity areas were articulated as questions, for example:

– How might we help people with care needs to manage their own condition?
– How might the experience of transitioning through care stages be improved?
– How might we support people caring for their loved ones?

This theme appeared to resonate strongly with many universities and was wide enough in scope for students to be able to align what they learn directly to their university briefs or final projects.

Because the theme resonated so strongly, with both students and the universities, Design for Care will remain the core theme for Design Academy in 2016/17.

Overall, the Design Academy process teaches students:

- how strategic design can provide a framework for innovation when addressing private and public sector challenges
- how to apply design frameworks, processes and methods to real-world problems
- how to identify and reframe new opportunities that directly challenge these problems
- how to shape ideas for testing to explore how they might deliver successful outcomes
- how to work collaboratively and in a way that organisations increasingly require.

At the end of the programme all students receive a Design Council 'Certificate of Completion', and one of the teams receives a 'special commendation' by the industry panel. The special commendation recognises excellence in the final presentation and the evidence it conveyed of the team applying a robust design process, working collaboratively and employing strategic problem solving. The specially commended teams have their work profiled on Design Council's website in an online showcase at the end of the academic year.

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[4]*Design for Care* is a major Design Council initiative to create a care system that is more personalised, more connected and more preventative. Over the next three to five years Design for Care will apply world-renowned design talent in a drive to invent and develop new systems, processes, products and services to increase well-being, to help reduce unnecessary hospital admissions and to help people stay in their own homes.

3

Who took part?

Manchester Metropolitan University (MMU)

Partners
Cabinet Office, ESRO, HyperIsland, IBM and MS24

Nov 2015

27

University of Portsmouth (PU)

Partners
Active Minds, ESRO, Policy Lab, Mercer and RNLI

Jan-Feb 2016

30

Nottingham Trent University (NTU)

Partners
ESRO, GSK, IBM and MultiAdaptor

Feb - Mar 2016

16

Norwich University of the Arts (NUA)

Partners
ESRO, ThinkPublic and TILT

Feb-Mar 2016

18

For the programme's pilot year, Design Council wanted to capture a mix of students from different design disciplines as well as different academic years. Of the 91 students who participated in Design Academy during its first six months:

- 61.5% were in their third year of study, while 37.4% were in their second year. This had implications both in terms of how advanced students were within their respective disciplines, but also in terms of the time they were able to allocate to the programme.
- Students spanned 14 disciplines: 3D Design, Architecture, Digital Media, Entertainment Technology, Fashion Design, Fashion & Textiles, Graphic Design, Illustration, Illustration with Animation, Interior Architecture & Design, Interior Design, Photography, Textile Design and Textiles in Practice. 37.4% on the programme were studying Graphic Design.*

*For a further breakdown of students by discipline/year group, see appendix.

Before launching the pilot, the programme was prototyped in two ways. Firstly, through a one-day workshop with a group of 20 second and third-year students from across nine design disciplines and 10 different institutes. Secondly, embedded within a Masters level module across a three month period at one institute. Through the feedback, the programme content was deemed appropriate for both undergraduate and postgraduate students, which suggests the Framework for Innovation and its underpinning content was of value to students at any stage of learning and across any design discipline.

Through the pilot stage, only undergraduate students took part, however in 2016/17 there will be a cohort of postgraduate students undertaking the programme – as well as students from Engineering & Science faculties. Working across these varying stages enables us to better understand the most effective target audience for the programme and therefore better support the universities in their student recruitment process.

Early findings in relation to working with second and third-year students appears to show that mixed cohorts are the most effective. This could be because the recruitment process enables universities to pick the most able students from each year group, or it could prove that mixed learning groups are beneficial to second-year students in gaining experience from the third-year cohort, while third-year students benefit from refreshing their thinking and challenging some of their more embedded attitudes.
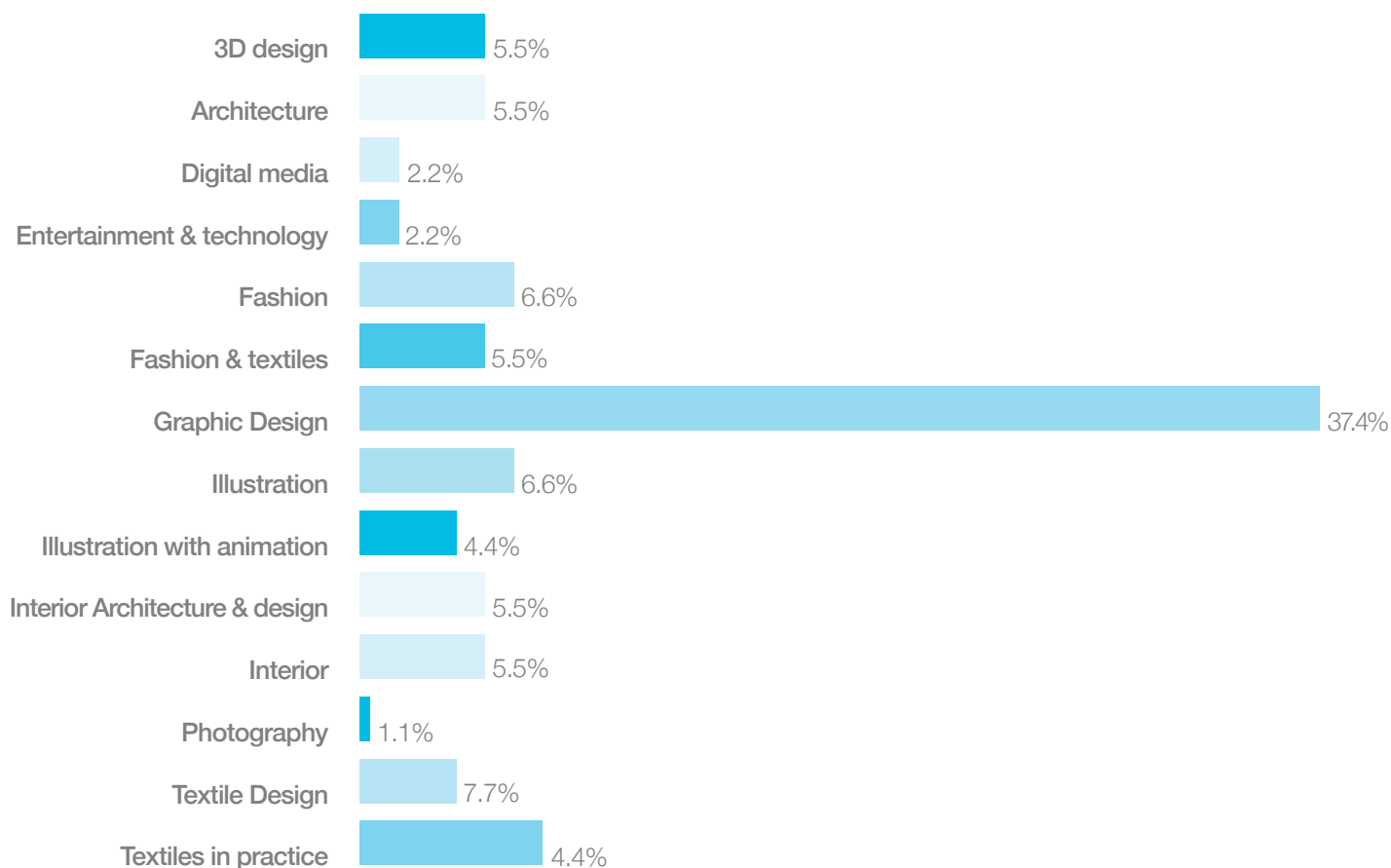
91

Total students

37.4%
2nd year students

61.5%
3rd year students

This had implications both in terms of how advanced students were within their respective disciplines, but also in terms of the time they were able to allocate to the programme.

Students spanned 14 disciplines

Discipline	Percentage
3D design	5.5%
Architecture	5.5%
Digital media	2.2%
Entertainment & technology	2.2%
Fashion	6.6%
Fashion & textiles	5.5%
Graphic Design	37.4%
Illustration	6.6%
Illustration with animation	4.4%
Interior Architecture & design	5.5%
Interior	5.5%
Photography	1.1%
Textile Design	7.7%
Textiles in practice	4.4%

4 Evaluation approach

Capturing the perspectives and expectations of students and university staff and faculty, before, during and after the pilot programme was an important factor for Design Academy. In order to help us assess the programmes effectiveness and potential to replicate across a larger group of students in the future. The key outcomes we surveyed included:

– Awareness of design and its role in innovation
– Improved understanding of innovation
– Improved understanding of design approaches that support an effective innovation process
– Improved effectiveness in using design approaches that support innovation
– Improved understanding of research methods
– Improved planning and problem-solving skills
– Improved collaborative and teamworking skills
– Improved creativity
– Enhanced confidence
– Greater confidence in future employment

The above indicators have given us a snapshot of early findings in relation to Design Academy. We are using these to help us gain a deeper understanding of the effectiveness and relevance of the course structure and content in order to make it even more fit for purpose to work across the range of disciplines, institutes and stages.

Students were surveyed before the programme started and after each session in order to measure knowledge and skill development. Responses to a range of statements were captured, corresponding to the outcomes listed above. This enables us to assess their learning progress and better understand the strengths and areas for development of the programme. In total, 91 students have taken part in the programme, and of those 66 completed both baseline data *and* post-programme data.

As the first to complete Design Academy, a follow-up survey was sent to the Manchester cohort three months after the end of the course. Already, interesting insights have been provided from 10 respondents, indicating the potential longer-term benefits of Design Academy. Follow-up surveys will also be sent to students of all participating institutes three months after their completion dates.

Additionally, each student completed a reflection and action-planning form at the end of day four asking them to think about how they would implement what they learned from the programme at three key stages: one month on, six months on and following the end of their design course.

Design Council will continue to track if and how the programme has continued to impact on their practice and employment prospects up to a year after students have graduated. As we gather these insights over the coming months, as well as building on the data from new cohorts signing up for Design Academy in 2016/17, we will be able to share our findings based on a larger and more comparable data set.

In addition, as part of our evaluation framework, Design Council conducted After Action Reviews with faculty staff from the four universities exploring what their expectations were before, during and after the programme, gaining insight into what went well and what could be improved.

5

Early findings and insights: students, universities and industry

The evaluation of Design Academy upon completion of the six-month pilot has uncovered some interesting findings and insights about the impact of the programme on participating students and in turn their respective universities and our industry partners. This section explores these in more detail across three key groups:

i. Students
ii. Universities
iii. Industry partners

i. Early findings and insights: Students

Key findings on the impact of Design Academy on students include:

– **greater awareness and understanding of design and innovation**
– **confidence in future employment and improvements in employment prospects**
– **learning through collaboration and reflection**

In total, 91 students have taken part in the programme, and of those 66 completed both baseline data and post-programme data. This enables us to measure their distance travelled in terms of the key learning outcomes. Below details the percentage of students who 'strongly agreed' or 'agreed' with each statement, which were the top two points on a five-point Likert scale.

- **Greater awareness and understanding of design and innovation**
  After completing four days of the course, the following outcomes for the 66 students across four different universities were observed:

  o **Improved awareness of design's role in innovation:** at the end of the programme, 86% 'strongly agreed' or 'agreed' that they are aware of the role design approaches play in delivering innovation. This included a 19% improvement in those who said they 'strongly agreed' with this statement at the end of the programme, compared to when they started.
  o **Improved understanding of strategic design:** at the end of the programme, 84% 'strongly agreed' or 'agreed' that they understood strategic design. This included a 44% improvement in those who said they 'strongly agreed' with this statement at the end of the programme, compared to when they started.
  o **Improved understanding of how to use design to drive innovation:** at the end of the programme, 81% 'strongly agreed' or 'agreed' that they understood how design is relevant to innovation and how to use it in their work. This included a 41% improvement in those who said they 'strongly agreed' with this statement at the end of the programme, compared to when they started.

This data show us that students had a basic awareness of the role design approaches play in delivering innovation. The most marked improvements were the enhanced understanding of strategic design and the impact this has made in enabling students to know how to use design for innovation in their own work. Going forward, we will capture more qualitative data in this area, asking students to unpack what they understand design's role in innovation to be, provide a definition of strategic design and give examples of how they would apply strategic design to drive innovation.

- **Improvements in employment prospects**
  Participants reported the following improvements in terms of their skills, many of which are indicative[5] of improving their future employment prospects:

  o 81% 'agreed' or 'strongly agreed' with the statement 'I often figure out different ways of doing things' at the end of the programme. This is indicative of levels of creativity, and there was a notable 25% increase in the percentage of students who 'strongly agreed' with this statement by the end of the programme, compared to at the beginning.

  o 80% also 'agreed' or 'strongly agreed' with the statement 'I am confident in practically applying design approaches to my work or real-world problems' at the end of the programme. This is indicative of levels of planning and problem-solving skills, with a 14% increase in the percentage of students who 'strongly agreed' with this statement by the end of the programme compared to at the beginning.

"Design Academy has genuinely influenced my career path and my career aspirations. I didn't know that strategic design was a discipline. It changed the goals I want to pursue. This has been the best group experience I've had at university."

Graphics student, Norwich University of the Arts

The increases above indicate participants have grown in confidence through the programme in terms of their levels of creativity, planning and problem-solving skills. They didn't rate themselves as highly at the beginning of the programme, but afterwards, they are much more confident about having these attributes. It is also clear that students are considering the impact these skills could have on their future employment, examples below. In developing the programme we may also explore how further support could enable students to identify the type of emerging career path they could follow, eg, within in-house corporate innovation; consultancy and business management; public and third sector; or new types of design agency.

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[5]The Behavioural Insights Team/Cabinet Office identified six key characteristics, based on extensive research, to assess whether participating in social action links to positive life outcomes, such as employability, for young people. See http://www.behaviouralinsights.co.uk/publications/evaluating-youth-social-action/ for further info (accessed 09/05/16).

As 3D design student, Theresa Kitching from Manchester Metropolitan University (MMU) responded via the three-month follow-up survey:

"I now believe that my knowledge and design thinking can be applied to so much more than I initially thought. The impact has been the fact that I am much more confident in my own endeavours, and no longer as nervous about where I see myself post-graduation, as I now believe there are so many more opportunities."

- **Confidence in future employment**
  The majority of participants (80%) completing all four days perceived the course to have improved their employment prospects. It is likely that such a high figure is testament to the fact that through a 'real-world' challenge as the focus, they subsequently were able to better relate to the material applied through the programme and, perhaps more importantly, recognised the connection between their design discipline and its potentially wide application beyond the design industry. A small number of students have even been inspired to write about Design Academy:

*"After a little time to reflect on the impact the Design Academy course has had, even in the short weeks since beginning it, it's clear how influential the knowledge I received has become. Firstly, the course opened my eyes to an entire sector of design that I was previously unaware of. **The importance of strategic design within the public and third sectors** was made apparent within the first few hours of the programme. From the case studies I saw during the initial presentations and workshops, **the need for design in 'non-design' settings** become clear. For someone like me, a designer approaching graduation who doesn't want to design for design's sake, finding an avenue where design thinking can create real, positive change is a truly exciting prospective.*

*After completing the course **I feel I can now add a design strategy string to my bow and go away feeling far more confident in my ability to apply the skills** I've been learning over the last three years I've spent at university. The course provided **a fresh perspective on possible future roles within the design world** and made me hungry to get out there and question it all with my newly acquired strategic mindset."*
Graphic Design student, Jonathan Price, Nottingham Trent University (NTU).

- **Learning through collaboration and reflection**
  A consistent finding of the evaluation is the value of peer review and learning. Where opportunities existed within the programme for students to work together or reflect with their peers, they were highly rated – for example, the team updates and project showcase were among the top-rated aspects of day three and four. Academic evidence suggests that providing people with regular opportunities to reflect and return feedback on what they know and understand with others is perhaps the most powerful influence on learning and achievement.[6] This suggests that bringing students together from different disciplines in a 'learn-by-doing' approach is one of the most valuable aspects of the programme, and that bringing in an outside partner to do this is helpful in terms of bringing balance and a range of perspectives into the delivery.

As Joe McCullagh, Head of Design at MMU commented: *"[Design Academy] offered a space where students could work together using the same methodology, but one which was new to them."* This was also remarked upon by 3D design student, Chelsey Roberts from MMU:

"In each design discipline available at universities like my own, regardless of the universities well-placed encouragement for interdisciplinary collaboration, there's a tendency for students to have a narrower idea of their future prospects than perhaps they should have… However, Design Academy has opened me up to think about the bigger picture, the role digital technology can play in and with my work, and how collaborations on a larger scale and with unexpected organisations and groups is not only a possibility, but an exciting and beneficial thing to do."

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[6]Hattie, J. (2009), *Visible learning: a synthesis of over 800 meta-analyses relating to achievement*, London: Routledge

Potential areas for development

After each workshop, participants were asked what additional support they required to apply the learning from that day. Over the four days there were a number of common themes among the 149 qualitative responses received to the question *'What further support might you need to apply learning from today?'*

A wide variety of themes emerged from this and ideas ranged from refresher programmes to provide students with further support in applying strategic design approaches to their university work, including: developing specific skills in design research methods and approaches to add value to the process of undertaking research on student projects; pathways for progression exploring how Design Council could provide guidance or signposting to post-graduate courses, work placements and internships; materials and resources, perhaps the most common request, where Design Council could provide a platform for ongoing learning and reference material.

We will be looking at this over the coming year as our second group of university partners undertake Design Academy during 16/17.

"We research the concept and the market, but not the user so much – I found that really useful. When you research an actual person it has more meaning and more value."

Textile Design student, Nottingham Trent University

ii. Early findings and insights: Universities

Design Academy worked with four universities across the UK during 2015-16: Manchester Metropolitan University; Norwich University of the Arts; Nottingham Trent University; and University of Portsmouth. The key findings on the impact of Design Academy for our university partners are:

– positive impact on the student experience
– influence on teaching practice
– supporting the notion of a leading-edge institute

- **Universities feel the course has contributed to the student experience**
  Staff at all four universities commented on how valuable the programme had been to students, in terms of shaping their thinking and practice. The significant ways universities felt the programme enhanced the student experience included:

  o Creating a space for different types of design students (ie, interior, fashion, product, etc) to get together and share ideas. All commented that this does not typically happen within universities themselves, with Norwich adding that while this type of collaboration is embedded at Masters level, it is not widespread across the undergraduate programmes.

o Introducing them to the world of work – both in terms of working on project teams, but also with regards to having to engage with a range of different people (Design Council staff, industry experts) and working and engaging at a professional level. As one member of staff commented, Design Academy is *"… more than the sum of its parts, more than the learning written on the paper. Students were engaging with professionals, presenting to panels of professionals at the end, put into groups that were not their normal peers, in terms of discipline … all this can only be gained through experience."*

o Applying design to real-life issues – the project briefs were grounded in real-world issues (ie, health and social care) and encouraged students to think about how what they've learned at both university and on the course can be applied practically. Each university indicated that the connection between design and improving real-life issues has been revelatory to students, with emerging results from the three-month follow-up survey supporting this – the majority of respondents felt they had benefited from 'Applying design approaches to real-world problems'.

• Influencing practice
While not originally planned when designing the programme, emerging evidence suggests exposure to the Design Academy is influencing institutional practice in different ways:

o Manchester and Portsmouth reported that they are looking at replicating the interdisciplinary nature of Design Academy and getting students from different disciplines working together, while Norwich indicated they were looking at increasing opportunities in their existing university-wide collaboration unit. *"At Portsmouth we talk about 'career-enhancing experiences' and this was a classic example. It was mindset changing."*

"The course provided a fresh perspective on possible future roles within the design world and made me hungry to get out there and question it all with my newly acquired strategic mindset."

Graphic Design student, Nottingham Trent University

o The most impactful Design Academy experiences in terms of influencing practice were when faculty members came along to the sessions to find out more about what their students were doing. For example, the Head of Graphics from one institute attended a half-day session and as a direct result is implementing changes to her core programme regarding the way the institute teaches design research.

o There are calls for the programme to be expanded to faculty staff. Both Nottingham and Manchester suggested Design Academy could be extended as a CPD opportunity for teaching staff. Portsmouth indicated interest in a 'Train the Trainer' model for faculty, as well as a separate offer to help university staff tackle strategic challenges they face, eg, implementing a new strategy. All universities are interested in repeating the programme next year.

[7] Bentley; Burberry; IBM; John Lewis; LeapStone; RBS; Rolls-Royce; and Hemingway Design

- **A leading-edge institute**
  Norwich, Manchester and Portsmouth all commented on the advantages
  of working in partnership with an independent organisation such as
  Design Council, which is working to develop practice at the leading edge of
  design and is able to act as convener for a diverse range of industry sectors.

  Design Council received unanimously enthusiastic feedback from student
  advocates from each university who had been through the programme. It is
  perhaps too early to tell whether Design Academy will support participating
  universities in attracting students, however one university has already made the
  first steps in using their participation as a promotional asset. The University of
  Portsmouth made a short film about their experience, showcasing the approach
  and impact the programme has had across the university. They plan to use the
  film and other resources in their faculty materials, website and during open days.

iii. Early findings and insights: Industry

Design Council worked with 14 industry partners (see table on page 8) in delivering the
Design Academy pilot and a further eight contributed to thought leadership in developing
the original Design Academy proposition.

Design Council has not undertaken formal evaluation with industry partners, but has asked
for informal feedback on their involvement and suggestions for improvement. There has been
a good level of endorsement and discussion of Design Academy by our industry partners
through social media channels, such as Twitter.

Insights we've developed through the last two years suggests the value of Design Academy
to industry aligns with three key areas:

– talent and recruitment
– quality of thinking and ideas
– building relationships between industry and education

- **Talent and recruitment**
  Design Council was seen by industry as a broker between universities
  and industry: potentially enabling opportunities from internships through to
  employment. The value of Design Academy here is linking up design schools
  with a wider range of industry sectors than they might traditionally engage, for
  example employers looking for people with strategic design skills, eg, Cabinet
  Office, GSK and Mercer. Students have contacted their faculty leads to explore
  the possibility of working for some of the organisations they have come into
  contact with through the programme and indeed a number of organisations
  were impressed by some of the students. How this might work in the context of
  graduate recruitment programmes will be further explored by Design Council.

- **Quality of thinking and ideas**
  The insights and possible concepts that the teams developed through the
  course of the programme were seen as having value for some of the industry
  partners. Through its growth and innovation programmes Design Council
  will explore if there a way for this model to be extended to allow ongoing
  relationships between students, universities and industry.

- **Building relationships between industry and education**
  There is a drive for industry to place design more strategically within their
  organisations and increasingly for design specifically to be used as an
  instrument for delivering innovation and culture change. In turn, there is
  greater diversity in the sectors looking to build relationships with the design
  community. Accenture, Barclays and PepsiCo for example, are all looking to
  make themselves the obvious employer choice for design graduates across
  a number of disciplines. Working in partnership with Design Council,
  for many of the organisations that collaborated and supported it, was
  perceived as helping to increase their visibility in the 'design space'.

6 What's next

Design Council will work over the coming months to further refine the programme offer based on user feedback and continue to track Design Academy alumni up to a year after they graduate in order to fully understand the impact of the programme on student employment prospects. We will also continue to develop partnerships with industry and explore ways to further strengthen the connection between students and employers, including the potential to introduce a more formalised route into internships via the programme.

In addition, we will deliver Design Academy again in 16/17 and already four universities have signed up for the six places available, which means the programme will support a further 180 students this year, a twofold increase on last year.

Registration for this year's programme closes early June 2016.

For further information about how your university could benefit from Design Academy please contact us: designacademy@designcouncil.org.uk

"I found the idea of the double diamond very helpful. Being able to identify where you are in a design process and being aware of the bigger picture in terms of what you're designing are crucial aspects to be taken into consideration"

Architecture student, Portsmouth University

7 Appendix

Breakdown of students by institute, discipline and year of study

	Total students	Discipline	# of students	%	Year of study	# of students	%
Manchester Metropolitan University	27	3D Design	5	18.5			
		Fashion	2	7.4			
		Graphic Design	7	25.9	second	0	0
		Illustration with Animation	4	14.8			
		Interior Design	5	18.5			
		Textiles in Practice	4	14.8	third	27	100
Nottingham Trent University		Fashion Design	2	12.5			
		Graphic Design	10	62.5	second	0	0
		Photography	1	6.3			
	16	Textile Design	3	18.8	third	16	100
Norwich University of the Arts		Fashion	2	11.1			
		Graphics	11	61.1	second	17	94.4
		Illustration	1	5.6			
	18	Textile Design	4	22.2	third	1	5.5
Portsmouth University		Architecture	5	16.6			
		Digital Media	2	6.6			
		Entertainment Technology	2	6.6	second	17	56.7
		Fashion & Textiles	5	16.6			
		Graphic Design	6	20			
		Illustration	5	16.6			
	30	Interior Architecture & Design	5	16.6	third	13	43.3
All Universities		3D Design	5	5.5			
		Architecture	5	5.5			
		Digital Media	2	2.2			
		Entertainment Technology	2	2.2			
		Fashion Design	6	6.6			
		Fashion & Textiles	5	5.5			
		Graphic Design	34	37.4	second	34	37.4
		Illustration	6	6.6			
		Illustration with Animation	4	4.4			
		Interior Architecture & Design	5	5.5			
		Interior Design	5	5.5			
		Photography	1	1.1			
		Textile Design	7	7.7			
		Textiles in practice	4	4.4	third	57	62.6
Total	91						

Design Academy Taster Session